GOINGPLACES.PH VOL. 2 NO. 8 / OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2018







Relax AND ENJOY THE MOMENT

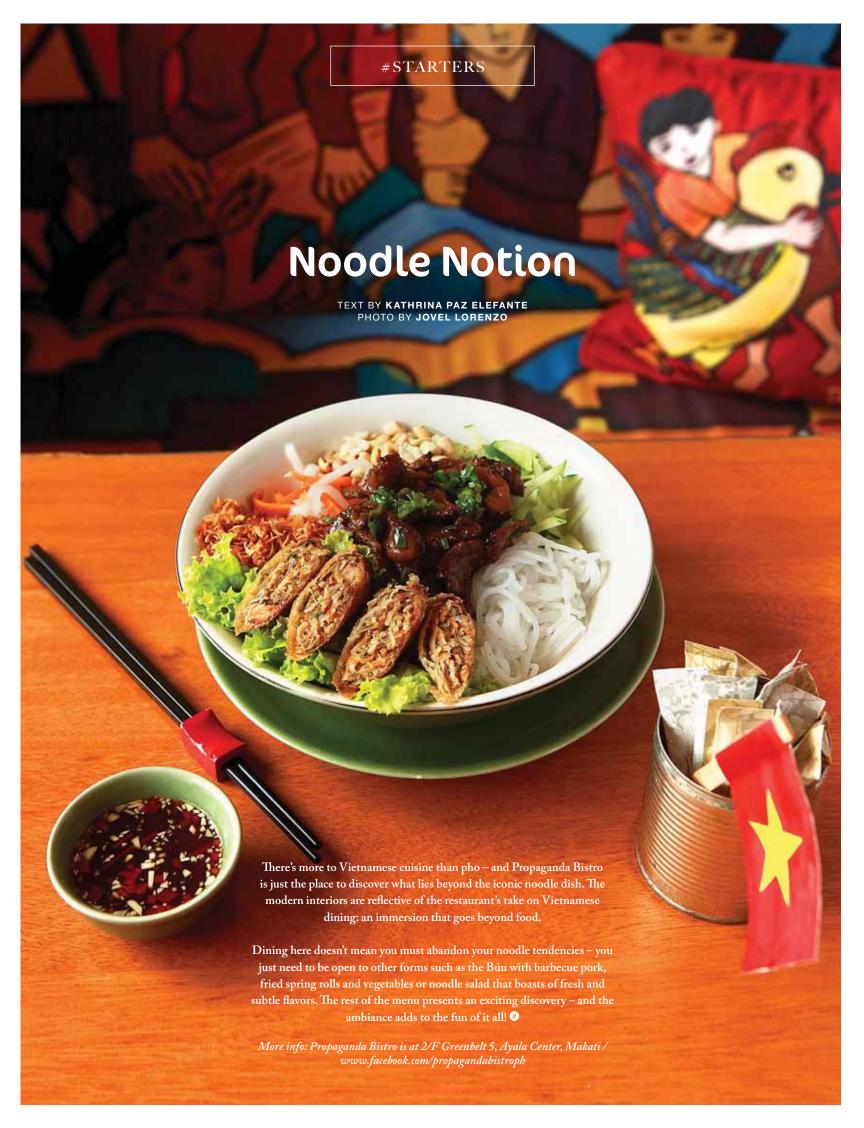
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VOL. 2 NO. 08 OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2018

06 Presidential Wheels

09 Forging Friendships

10 Manila Animated

12 Taiwan Tang

13 When in Warung

14 Brave Island

16 Beach Hut Bliss

17 Wave Culture

20 Twin Peaks

24 Fish Forever

26 Oriental Escape

28 Crazy Rich Asia

34 Time for Thia

36 Royalty Roster

40 Macau Rush

42 Reverence in Ruins

44 Kansai Ablaze

50 Huffing & Puffing on Cloud 9

56 Journey to Fitness

58 How to Avoid Travel Burnout

60 Finding Serenity in Seoul

62 Forest Bathing

64 Sleep Well Tonight

72 Higher Ground

#GoingHome FROM THE EDITOR

ASIAN CONUNDRUM

have been around Asia all my life and I'm always 'envious' of something that another city has that our country lacks. I envy Hong Kong's vibe, Singapore's order, Beijing's charm, Bangkok's mood, Tokyo's sophistication, etc., etc.

Landing back in Manila from other airports (such as Changi or Incheon Airport), I can't help but heave a sigh of regret why my trip was not extended. I look around and resign myself to the heat, traffic, disorderly conduct, and maybe some unscrupulous individuals or cab drivers.

Why can't we be like the other Asian countries who have overtaken us? There was a time when the Philippines was top in terms of everything, but today - even with our proficiency with the English language – we are the laggard. It is a sad reality.

Heading back home, I was fortunate to ride a cab with a pleasant driver who initiated a small talk. He told some stories about his family, about his 2 kids, his humble upbringing, his tragic early life

when he was still living in a small town in Leyte. In his stories, I noticed that there is a sense of contentment and true happiness that comes from within him.

In all my trips around Asia, it is so rare to find a person who emanates contagious joy if he has no dime in his pocket. It is only the Filipino who can muster a genuine smile even with all the tragedies that have beset him. It is only the Filipino who can still laugh heartily amidst a situation that calls for weeping and gnashing of teeth.

That night, even with the most comfortable beds in 5-star hotels in other countries, I felt like king in my own bed. It feels good to come home and indeed, there's no place like home.



oingplaces

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MARVELOUS MACAO

There's more to Macao than just casinos. Although known for its thriving gambling industry, this special administrative region of China can definitely offer more.

The etymology of Macao is derived from Magao, a temple dedicated to the sacred sea goddess Mazu who is respected by the locals. Aside from its rich historical heritage, its four regions – The Macao Peninsula, Taipa, Cotai and Coloane – all boast of tourist attractions you wouldn't want to miss

Some of these include: The Ruins of St. Paul which originally contained the St. Paul's College and the old St. Paul's Church also called 'Mater Dei'; Monte Fort, the historic center of Macao Military; Senado Square, Macao's urban center surrounded by pastel-colored neo-classical buildings; Guia Fortress, supposedly designed to protect the city from attacks from the sea but chiefly functioned as an observational post; Macao Museum; Macao Giant Panda Pavillion; Macao Tower; Taipa Village and more.

With festive events lined up for the Year of Gastronomy 2018, you'll surely have a fun and memorable experience. So, if you're planning your next getaway and you're thinking of travelling abroad, now is the perfect time to explore Macao.

FINE FOOD

You'll definitely find Macao's culture and culinary customs interesting with its unique blend of ancient Chinese and European influences. Cited by UNESCO as the 2017 Creative City of Gastronomy, Macao offers irresistable dining fushions. Plus, on its 18th year, The Macao Food Festival

transforms a simple food feast into a large food carnival presenting a variety of cuisines from local specialties to international delicacies prepared by participating eateries and catering companies both from their country and overseas.

For the convenience of visitors, the event is divided into different areas to easily locate the kind of food they want. Happening on Nov. 9 to 25, the venue for hosting this gourmet celebration is Sai Van Lake Square and is higlighted by fireworks, exhibitions and games stands, singing and dancing performances and photography contest to tickle the palate and appeal to the senses.

THRILLING SPORTS

Started on the 30th and 31st of October 1954, The Macao Grand Prix has been held in the downtown of the city, at the Guia Raceway, which is famous for its many bends and narrowness. On Nov. 15 to 18, get ready for the only street circuit racing event which will gather car and motorcycle riders from all over the world.

YULETIDE SPIRIT

Giving you the perfect Christmas feels, The Macao Light Festival will entertain you with a series of activities on December. Marvel Macao at night through a display of light artistry allowing people to learn many things about the city and its vast history. The program also includes projection mapping and light installations.

Whether it is food, sports, or festivities, Macao has it. Now is the best time for a Macao journey.



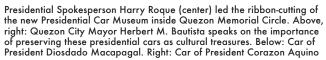






#ARTSPIRATION



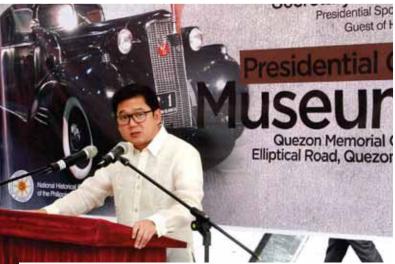




t seems like 2018 is a year for Philippine museums.

Early this year, the National Museum declared that admission is free for everyone – forever. By May, the Museum of Natural History in Manila, the newest and considered to be one of the most beautiful structures in the city, also opened its doors to curious minds and nature buffs to enjoy its 6-storey attraction filled with preserved flora and fauna found only in the Philippines.

It is not yet over. Last August, in time for the commemoration of the birth anniversary of former President Manuel L. Quezon, the Quezon City Government in cooperation with the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), unveiled to the public the Museo ng Pampangulong Sasakyan (Presidential Car Museum), which showcases the official state vehicles of the country's past presidents.





Led by Quezon City Mayor Herbert M. Bautista, various VIP personalities were also guests during the event, including guest-of-honor Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque and NHCP Chairperson Dr. Rene Escalante.

Also present during the event were the descendants of the past Presidents like the family of President Quezon.

The museum is located in a 2,000-sqm building inside the Quezon Memorial Circle. There are 14 automobiles on display, most owned and used by past presidents. However, there are also some which have been used by key figures in Philippine history like General Douglas MacArthur's 1934 Cadillac V16 Tranformable Town Cabriolet and Imelda Marcos' 1960 Rolls-Royce Phantom V. There's also Ramon Magsaysay's 1934 Willys MB Jeep which he used when he was still Secretary of Defense.

Of course, the highlight of the museum are the presidential wheels like President Quezon's 1924 Packard Single-6 Touring, President Manuel Roxas' Cadillac Fleetwood Series 75 Limo, and a replica of President Diosdado Macapagal's 1959 Cadillac Sedan DeVille.







Mayor Bautista points at the projection mapping wall. Right, from top: President Ramon Magsaysay's jeep; car of President Ramos. Left: Car of President Marcos. Below: Car of President Emilio Aguinaldo



The museum is a project that's still a work in progress because it aims to expand and display the vehicles used by more current leaders like President Noynoy Aquino.

The museum was built to attract and encourage motorheads to learn more about the country's history through wheels as each vehicle is associated with key events that happened in the country.

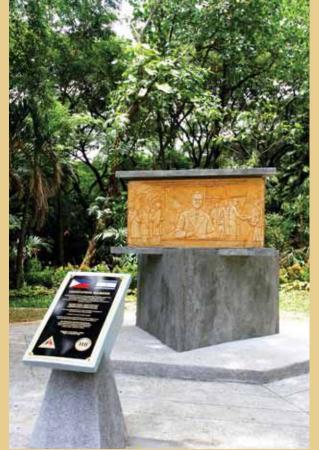
There's a stately feel in the museum and the layout reminded some history buffs of the Chiang Kai Shek Museum in Taiwan (which incidentally, has on display another Philippine Presidential car - that of Ferdinand Marcos Sr.).

The museum also has an interactive projection mapping wall, a meeting room and a souvenir shop which sells commemorative stamps featuring the presidential cars.

And like all national museums, entrance is also free at the Presidential Car Museum, so make sure to drop by after your morning exercise at the Quezon Memorial Circle.



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Left: Philippine-Israeli Friendship Park inside the Quezon Memorial Circle. Above: Quezon City Mayor Herbert M. Bautista (center) led the unveiling of the park together with former Israeli Ambassador H.E. Ephraim Ben Matityau (3rd from right) together with the Councilors of Quezon City.

Forging Friendships

Quezon City strengthens ties with Israel and Davao City

TEXT BY RAYMUND MAGNO GARLITOS

any Filipinos are not aware that many decades ago, on the brink of World War II, the country provided sanctuary to 1,300 Jewish people that fled Europe in the late 1930s. It was former President Manuel L. Quezon who stood up and took the challenge, becoming the only Asian leader to open the doors of the country.

This year, the deep and profound ties of the Philippines and Israel are strengthened anew, this time with the inauguration of the Philippines-Israeli Friendship Park in time for the celebration of the 140th birth anniversary of Quezon.

Located inside the Quezon Memorial Circle complex, the park was launched by Quezon City officials led by Mayor Herbert Bautista, City Administrator Aldrin Cuña and former Israeli Ambassador H.E. Ephraim Ben Matityau.

A monument was installed at the center of the park, designed and created by teachers and students of the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts. It highlighted 3 central events in the shared history between the Philippines and Israel – the shelter and rescue of Jewish refugees from the holocaust through President Quezon's "Open Door Policy"; the

signing of Resolution 181 that established the creation of the State of Israel, of which the Philippines is a signatory; and the establishment of diplomatic ties between the 2 countries in 1958.

"Friends in need are friends indeed is our way of cooperation, which among others, led our 2 countries to abolish visa requirements way back in 1969. You opened the gates and hearts to our people, we open our gates to you," Matityau said.

On a similar note, Quezon City also renewed its sister-city relations with Davao City, which was first established when then former Mayors Ismael Mathay Jr. and (now Philippine President)

Rodrigo Duterte signed a memorandum of understanding in 1994.

Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio visited Quezon City Hall and met Quezon City Mayor Bautista and Vice Mayor Belmonte in simple ceremonies to formalize the agreement.

"We look up to Quezon City," Mayor Duterte said. "We in Davao City look at the best practices of Quezon City so that we could also improve our public service to Davaoeños."



Mayor Bautista and Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio sign the reaffirmation of the sister-city partnership between the 2 cities.



Artist creates colorful narratives out of everyday Manila life

TEXT BY KATHRINA PAZ ELEFANTE

or artist Marius Funtilar aka Marius Black, there is beauty in the mundane. He turns the gritty, everyday scenes of Manila into colorful art prints, which he calls Manila Ukiyo-e. Ukiyo-e is a Japanese art form that flourished in the 17th to 19th centuries and refers to woodblock prints often depicted on Japanese screens or scrolls.

"I've always been inspired by Japanese art and aesthetic. I've always loved reading manga and watching anime, most notably the works of Akira Toriyama and Yoshihiro Togashi," shared Marius who also writes, draws and self-publishes his own comics and manga under Kuro Saku, his tandem art group with wife Guada. "Comic books such the X-Men, Spiderman, and The Maxx are also great influences to my art. I just love the bright and vivid colors on these comic books."

These inspirations come together on his Manila Ukiyo-e prints with each one starting out as a photo.

"I always take my digicam with me wherever I go and take lots of pictures, mostly of people with interesting faces or expressions or who are just being themselves." He then traces the outline with pencil and ink, scans them, prints them on watercolor paper and



finally hand-paints the colors in.

It's the colors that give these familiar scenes new meaning and add a hopeful tone to the harsh realities depicted in some of the pieces.

"I hope to inspire people to appreciate the beauty around them,

for them to take a second look and see that life is not really so mundane as they think. I think it is a gift to be able to see these things and share it with people: the beauty that goes unnoticed."

More info: Manila Ukiyo-e art prints by Marius Black are available for sale through www.facebook. com/ManilaUkiyoE









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Enjoy Fatfook's bestsellers like Xiao Long Bao, Taiwan-style Fried Rice, Black Pepper Beef, Taiwan Beef Noodles, Beef Tendon Hotpot and Taiwanese milk tea flavors like the strawberry and matcha

f you haven't been to Taiwan but curious about Taiwanese cuisine, head to the nearest Fat Fook branch for a culinary discovery.

Brought by Noodlerama

Brought by Noodlerama Group, the same company who introduced Ramen Nagi in the country, Fat Fook offers a wide selection of Taiwanese dishes.

Patricia Buzon, Marketing Manager, describes the menu as a window to Taiwan's culinary scene as it features both traditional dishes and street food, and Taiwanese milk teas.

"We commissioned a Taiwanese chef who grew up in the country to curate the menu. Most of the dishes we have are cultivated from traditional recipes of our chef and then developed to appeal to the Filipino taste," Buzon said.

Taiwanese dishes are relatively new to the Filipino palate and Buzon believes that Fat Fook lets Filipinos explore new flavors.

"Filipinos are familiar with Chinese cuisine but not with Taiwanese dishes. Both dishes are somehow related but Fat Fook infuses new flavors perfect for those who have an adventurous palate."

Start by getting a bowl of Taiwan Beef Noodles, which has silky noodles bathed in rich beef broth topped with beef cubes. Enjoy the combination of spicy, savory and sweet flavors of Beef Tendon Hotpot with Szechuan pepper and salt in a rich sauce, and Black Pepper Beef with beef strips and black pepper flavored sauce.

You can also try the best sellers: Fat Fook Chicken Chop, a huge chunk of deep-fried chicken seasoned to perfection that can be shared with family and friends paired with Taiwan-style Fried Rice with authentic Taiwanese sausage. Make sure to save some space for their Xiao Long Bao, too.

To wash off the sensational piquant flavors, indulge in classic Taiwanese milk tea flavors like the strawberry and matcha.

More info: Fat Fook has branches in SM City North EDSA, SM Megamall, Robinsons Galleria and Glorietta 1 / www.facebook.com/FatFookManila







From left: Warung's Gulai Kepala Ikan or fish head curry is one of their best-sellers; the Doctora sisters Tess & Louh; a hearty bowl of Soto Bitawi

When in Warung

Kapitolyo restaurant shows there's more to Indonesian food

TEXT BY MAE LORRAINE RAFOLS LORENZO PHOTOS BY JOVEL LORENZO

ilipinos have always been enamored by Asian cuisine. We've gone crazy over Japanese ramen, Korean barbecue, Taiwanese milk tea, and even Chinese siomai. But when it comes to Indonesian food, we're always left wondering on what to order other than the savory satays, the fragrant beef rendang and nasi goreng (fried rice).

If you're planning to discover more of what this cuisine can offer, then either head out to the Legazpi Sunday Market in Makati or book a table at Warung Warung in Kapitolyo, Pasig.

Warung Kapitolyo is hard to miss: Just look for the restaurant with the intricately carved wooden gate along East Capitol Drive. The welcome arc is pretty much a sign of what to expect from the restaurant: well-thought of dishes courtesy of the Doctora sisters, Louh Doctora Decena and Tess Doctora Eugenio.

Between the 2, it was Louh who really enjoyed being in the kitchen and was inspired by their mother and grandmother's home cooking. Most of the dishes they offer are regional dishes that she knows would be enjoyed by Filipino diners.

Starting small

Warung Warung started as a stall in the Legazpi Sunday Market way back in 2006. The sisters offered Nasi Bungkus, equivalent to a Filipino value meal with rice, a viand and side dishes. The meal proved to be popular and their initial choices grew from 3

kinds of dishes to 14. Also popular in their Legazpi stall is the Sate Ayam, skewered chicken slathered generously with their very own peanut sauce.

When they opened Warung Kapitolyo, diners and loyal stall goers were now offered with something more - a menu that presented Indonesian cuisine as an exciting culinary treat.

"Indonesian cuisine is distinct because spices to be used for every dish are ground first so that the flavors come out and all come together," said Louh.

More than just sate

Although Warung is famous for their Sate Ayam, there's still so much on their menu that is worth trying.

For starters, there's the hearty bowl of Soto Bitawi, a flavorful soup made of tomatoes, beef, coconut cream and just a hint of lime. This soup is best served with Tahu Telur, soft omelette with silky tofu slathered in a special peanut sauce.

For the main meal, try something bold like mashed fried chicken smothered with spicy and fragrant sambal. The dish, called Ayam Penyet, is best eaten with a side of Tumis Kangkung (stirfried watercress) and a heaping bowl of hot rice.

Warung is also proud of their Gulai Kepala Ikan or fish head curry, which is a crowd favorite thanks to the meaty maya-maya fish bathed in spicy, aromatic curry sauce.

Vegetarians will also find something special in the resto's menu. They offer a variety of curry dishes which make use of Quorn, a meat alternative made of myoprotein which tastes exactly like chicken or pork.

And since their dishes are always so flavorful, the sisters recommend ending every meal with Es Teler – shaved ice with avocado, langka, and condensed milk to 'clean the palate' and make you ready for your next Indonesian treat!

More info: Warung Warung Kapitolyo is at 83 East Capitol Drive, Brgy. Kapitolyo, Pasig. The restaurant is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 12 noon to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends

#WANDERLUST



There is more to Siargao than surfing - and it involves going out of your comfort zone

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY KATHRINA PAZ ELEFANTE ADDITIONAL PHOTOS BY TAK VERGARA

o someone who hasn't been to Siargao, the name of the island is enough to have visions of an exotic and untamed landscape - and this isn't far from reality. This teardrop-shaped island of Surigao del Norte remains to be virtually untouched by commercialism. Instead of finding rows of retail stores or franchise restaurants along its beaches, there's a seemingly infinite number of coconut trees, a few local shops, and maybe a coconut vendor.

Siargao is famously known as the surfing capital of the Philippines but non-surfers and adrenaline junkies can have an exciting time around the island, too.







Island-hopping may already sound cliche but Siargao's clear waters are hard to ignore and resist. Guyam, Dako and Naked Island are the usual stops but smaller islands are also worth the visit such as Marka-a Island where you can enjoy swimming with tiny fish. For something more adventurous, head to the town of Socorro and explore Sohoton Cove in Bucas Grande Island.

Sohoton is derived from the Cebuano word 'so-oton', which means 'to pass through a small opening'. Visitors would have to duck under a small cavernous opening as the motor boat speeds through. Limestone cliffs come into view, including a horse tail-shaped formation that serves as the boatmen's landmark.

One of the cove's 'secret' caves is Hagukan Cave, which boasts of glowing green water. Its name means 'to snore' and is named as such because of the sounds inside the cave when the water is high.

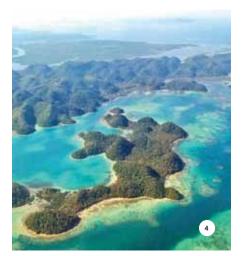
Just nearby is Magkukuob Cave where you have to wade in waist-deep water and go up a steep path before jumping off the platform that's 12 feet above the water.

The cove also has a Jellyfish Sanctuary where stingless jellyfish swim about, abundant during the first quarter of the year. A small 2-man paddle boat is the only way to reach this lagoon and the boatman can help you 'catch' a jellyfish long enough for you to touch it.





Opposite page: Serene Sugba Lagoon This page: 1. Stingless jellyfish can be found in Sohoton Cove. 2. Marka-a Island is a small and secluded island with clear waters. 3. Morning scene at Naked Island. 4. Bird's-eyeview of Megancub Island in Del Carmen. 5. Surfing at the famous Cloud 9 surf break



Another lagoon for platform diving is Sugba Lagoon located within Del Carmen's expansive mangrove forest, the largest contiguous stand of mangroves in the Philippines at 4,200 hectares. There is something comforting about the stillness of the lagoon's surroundings that kayaking or water biking around it feels like a meditative experience.

Siargao is not exactly for the faint of heart. It requires you to go out of your comfort zone, as if challenging tourists and their notion of a typical island experience, to get to the heart of its character. And if you are brave enough, you are rewarded with stories that are anything but typical.

Going There:

PAL Express flies from Manila to Siargao with a stopover in Cebu. You can also catch Skyjet's direct flight to Siargao, which only takes an hour and 20 minutes.

Great Pointers

It's always good to be a responsible tourist when it comes to visiting island destinations like Siargao. Be sure to bring a water tumbler and plastic-free options for hygiene products. Getting to Siragao's coves means hours of traveling by boat so it is recommended to bring earplugs if your ears are quite sensitive. Always bring a beach towel and wear dri-fit clothing because comfort rooms are not always available.





Ocean 101 Beach Resort has inviting wide-open spaces that make you want to spend as much time outdoors

Beach Hut Bliss

Enjoy panoramic ocean views at one of Cloud 9's beach resorts

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY KATHRINA PAZ ELEFANTE

hammock and a hut are 2 requisites of a relaxing tropical getaway – and Ocean 101 Beach Resort boasts of a great view from both vantage points.

Located at walking distance from Siargao's Cloud 9 boardwalk, the resort has inviting wide-open spaces that make you want to spend as much time outdoors just basking in the warm sun and beautiful scenery.

For accommodations, the resort has modern 'huts' facing the ocean so you can watch the rolling waves right from your room's veranda.

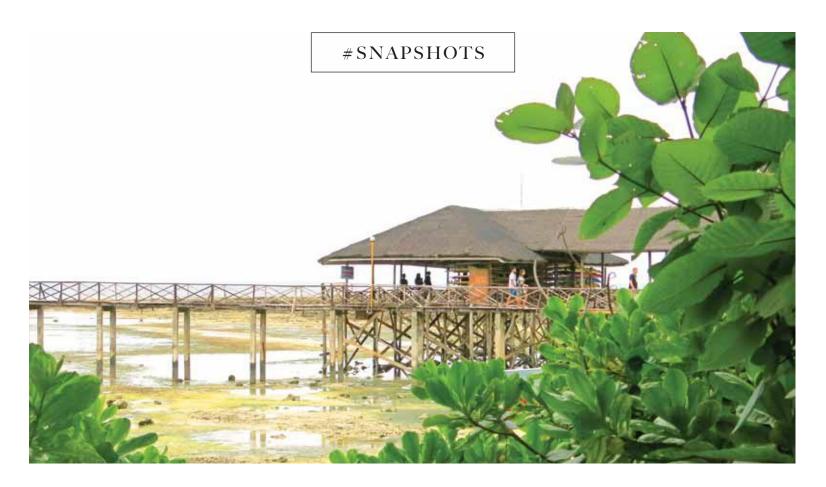
They also have a large native hut that's closer to the beach, the perfect spot to while away the afternoon and wait for the sunset.

More info: Ocean 101
Beach Resort is at Cloud
9, General Luna, Siargao
Island, Surigao del Norte
/ www.ocean101cloud9.
com / follow at www.
facebook.com/
ocean101resort









Siargao's Cloud 9 is known as one of the world's best surfing spots - and surfing has become inextricably part of the local culture. Surf schools and resorts dot the area and a walk along the beach will surprise you with colorful signs and murals inspired by the waves.

First-time visitors will find the island's raw charm irresistible - and that's what makes this destination a true island getaway not just for people who want to catch a wave but also for those who crave a re-connection with nature.





#WANDERLUST

Twin Peaks

Double the fun and adventure with an Eastern Visayas discovery

TEXT & PHOTOS BY KIM FERRER

f you're looking for a new and thrilling road trip adventure that's out of the ordinary, best to travel to Eastern Visayas and explore the provinces of Samar and Leyte. Here, you can explore majestic waterfalls and discover natural stone formations in the province of Samar then spend the last few days of vacation 'beaching' around the white sand beaches and heritage tours of Leyte.

#ITSSAMARTIME

BEGIN THE ROAD TRIP ADVENTURE IN CALBAYOG CITY, WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE PROVINCE'S ECO-TOURIST SPOTS AND HISTORICAL LANDMARKS. ADD THESE DESTINATIONS ON YOUR LIST TO MAKE SURE YOU'LL NEVER MISS THE BEST OF THE PROVINCE:



SAMAR ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL MUSEUM, CALBAYOG CITY

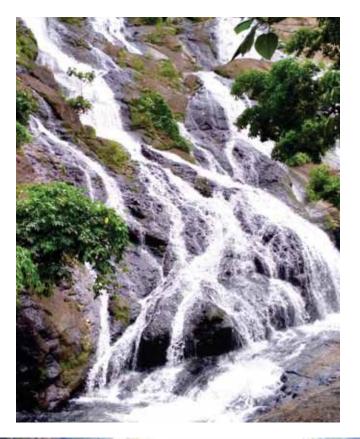
Start a road trip by learning the history of the province at the Samar Archeological and Cultural Museum inside Christ the King College. Explore some of the greatest discoveries of historian Jesuit priest, Fr. Cantius Kobak. Inside you can find pottery, stoneware, jars and wooden religious images found in Capul Island, where the seat of Christianity in Samar started.

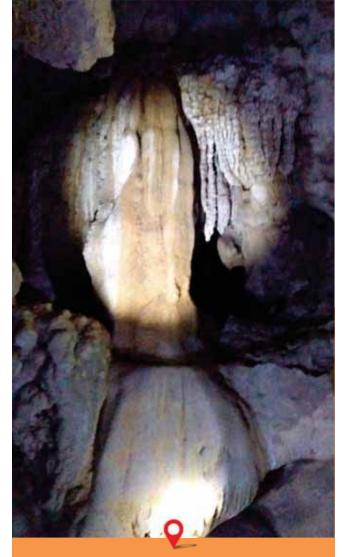
The museum's centerpiece is the old retablo of the Cathedral of the Diocese of Calbayog before it was repaired in 1965. This is also where Fr. Kobak's greatest scholarly achievement can be seen – Francisco Ignacio Alcina's *Historia de las Islas e Indios de Bisayas* 1668, which he transcribed and translated from Spanish to English.

Q TARANGBAN FALLS, CALBAYOG CITY

After discovering the province's history, it's time for extreme adventure at the Tarangban Falls. Before you get a look at the beauty of the falls, you have to trek on the ascending trails and deep rocky slopes in the middle of a forest for about 30 minutes. The falls is known for its crystal-clear water and calming sound while it cascades from the top of the mountain.

After discovering Calbayog City, drive to the Municipality of Basey which is 3 hours away. Basey features Sohoton Natural Park which many have dubbed a hidden paradise.





PANHULUGAN CAVE, BASEY

Local stories have it that Sohoton and Panhulugan
Caves were inhabited thousands of years ago, as
archeological findings such as bones of early cave
dwellers and their possessions were discovered inside i
Inside are rock formations depicting various images like
an eagle landing, a man and wife in a wedding, a versio



Q SOHOTON NATURAL PARK, BASEY

Samar is home to the largest cave system in the country, many of which can be found in Basey. The natural park spans 840 hectares which include a cave, rock formations, and natural bridge.

Sohoton is called by locals as a hidden paradise because before reaching the main park, you'll have to cruise down the Basey River for 20 minutes. Once you arrive at the main natural park, you can either do spelunking in Panhulugan Cave or kayak for 15 minutes going to the natural bridge.





SAN JUANICO BRIDGE. **TACLOBAN CITY**

Going to Leyte from Samar was once impossible but with the San Juanico Bridge, the 2 provinces are easily connected. It links Santa Rita, Samar and Tacloban City, Leyte and is the longest bridge spanning a body of seawater in the country. It has an arch-shaped truss design and is constructed during the Marcos administration. It has a total length of 2.16 kilometers and is one of the most famous tourist spots in the country.



#MYFAIRLEYTE

NOW IT'S TIME TO DISCOVER LEYTE! JUST AN HOUR AWAY FROM BASEY IS TACLOBAN CITY, LEYTE. IN THIS PROVINCE, EXPLORE ONE OF PHILIPPINE'S ARCHITECTURAL MARVELS AND A PARADISE THAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RAVING ABOUT.



Going There:

There are many ways to travel from Manila to Samar and then Leyte, but if you're up for an adventure then why not take your car? From Manila drive all the way to Sorsogon and take a RORO-ferry going to Samar.

Going Further:

Still have the energy to explore San Ricardo, ride a ROROferry going to Surigao.



MACARTHUR LANDING MEMORIAL PARK, TACLOBAN CITY

At the heart of Tacloban City is the historical marker of General Douglas MacArthur's landing in the country. It commemorates the historic landing of General MacArthur in Leyte Gulf on October 1944. The memorial park has a lagoon where a life-size statue of Gen. MacArthur stands.

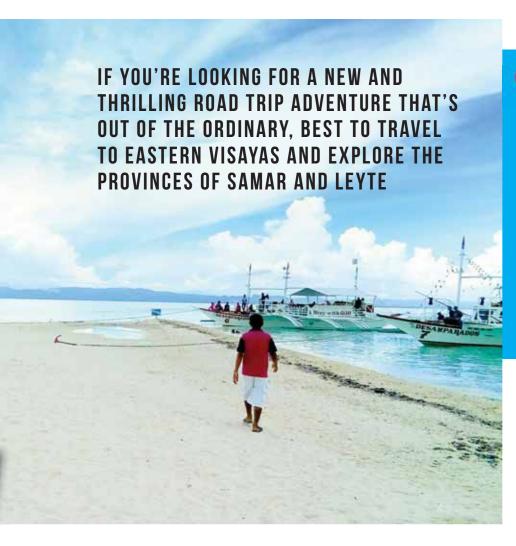


VILLA CONZOILO, JARO

Drive for an hour in Tacloban and you'll reach Jaro in an hour. Here you can find Villa Conzoilo, an eco-tourist destination made of 2,691 hectares of land used for agricultural, livestock and forestland.

Maintained by a cooperative whose members are part of the Barangay Villa Conzoilo community, it's one of the few that practices an integrated and diversified organic farming approach. The farming community cultivates grapes, asparagus, strawberry and onions, a first in the region.







KALANGGAMAN ISLAND, PALOMPON

From Jaro, drive to Polompon and from Kalanggaman Island.

The island's beauty is raw. There are no sand beach and aquamarine ocean. More than just a paradise, the government of Palompon practices responsible tourism in keeping the island in shape. It only allows 500 visitors a day, and there are days that they shut down the island for it to rest. Using soap on the island is not allowed and it strictly implements responsible tourism.



O DANAO LAKE, ORMOC CITY

A 2,193-hectare guitar-shaped lake enveloped by verdant forest with a view of rolling mountains and hills, Danao Lake plays a vital role for some towns of Eastern Leyte. The lake supplies water for irrigation and is also being used as drinking water to most homes. You can kayak or dine inside the floating cottages while in the middle of the lake while basking at the nature surrounding it.

The provinces of Samar and Leyte are part of the 'New Found Paradise' destinations of the Philippine Tour Operators Association (PHILTOA). goingplace

Fish Forever

Negros Oriental finds a delicate balance in fishing and marine conservation

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY FERDZ DECENA

here's a thin line between reaping the benefits of the sea and protecting this aquatic wealth. Most of time the interests of fishermen and the management of our precious marine resources don't really meet. As an archipelago bound on all sides by water, the Philippines has some of the richest marine life in the world. Sadly, this wealth is threatened by unregulated fishing which often leads to overfishing.

"It's a very complicated problem. Fishermen have a catch quota *pero walang nakakaalam kung ilan talaga ang isda sa dagat* (while authorities may set a catch quota, no one really knows how much fish is there in the sea)," said Roquelito Mancao, Director of Technical Operations of RARE Philippines, the local affiliation of a global marine conservation group.

Fish Forever

Marine conservation efforts in the Philippines started way back in the 1950s as a coastal research development program of the national government observed that local fishers were exploiting our coastal resources. A community-based coastal resource management model was put into place in the 70s and 80s.

In the 1990s, the coastal resource management model became an essential part of legal conservation efforts on the national and local levels. Fast-forward to 2010, RARE, a global conservation organization, entered the country to empower communities through the Fish Forever coastal program.

The program is all about utilizing pride, changing behaviors, and a small-scale spatial management for sustainable fishing. The key here is empowerment – letting those who gain directly by fishing the sea know their valuable role in helping sustain this resource.

By using positive reinforcement instead of restrictions, fishermen are empowered and becomes aware of the value of their resources which they also need to protect.

RARE also conceptualizes mascots representing each project area. Not only are the mascots designed carefully to resonate with the community but symbolizes the critical species in the area. At the moment, there are 38 Fish Forever Sites in the Philippines.













Model for Conservation

From the very beginning, RARE looked up to the conservation model of the Apo Island at the tip of Negros Oriental. Since being declared a protected Seascape and Landscape in 1994, the island has become one of the top destinations for diving and snorkelling. Even after being damaged in the wake of typhoons Sendong and Pablo, the vibrant garden of corals was able to recover, captivating school of jacks returned and waters are once again teeming with resident turtles.

Apo Island hosts up to 200 snorkelers and 100 drivers a day. Visitors are only given 15-20 minutes to snorkel with the turtles. Furthermore, a 4-visitor per local snorkel guide ratio was implemented to lessen the impact and disturbance of the turtles.

With considerable income coming from tourism, local fisher folks are compelled to lessen, if not altogether stop fishing, to let the marine life recover and propagate.

From Apo Island to Tañon Strait

Applying the successful model from Apo Island to Tañon Strait, the largest marine protected area in the Philippines, can be a big challenge. What RARE did was to take incremental, baby steps, campaigning in one community at a time, a less daunting and more doable plan of action.

At the moment, 22 municipalities are implementing the Fish Forever campaign. Two of the notable municipalities are Amlan, located on the east coast of Negros Island and Badian, on the western coast of Cebu.

Amlan is one of the pioneers in implementing the campaign in 2010. The town has been strictly enforcing the ban for commercial fishing and actively apprehending vessels caught violating the Fisheries Code of the Philippines in their protected waters. The 6-hectare Tandayang Marine Sanctuary just off the coast of Amlan beach is a fast-rising spot for snorkeling and diving.

Badian is one of the most popular ecotourism destinations in Cebu. The reasons are aplenty - from the azure waters of Kawasan Falls, to the rugged terrain of Osmenia peaks; from the excellent diving at Moalboal to the sardine run at Panagsama beach.

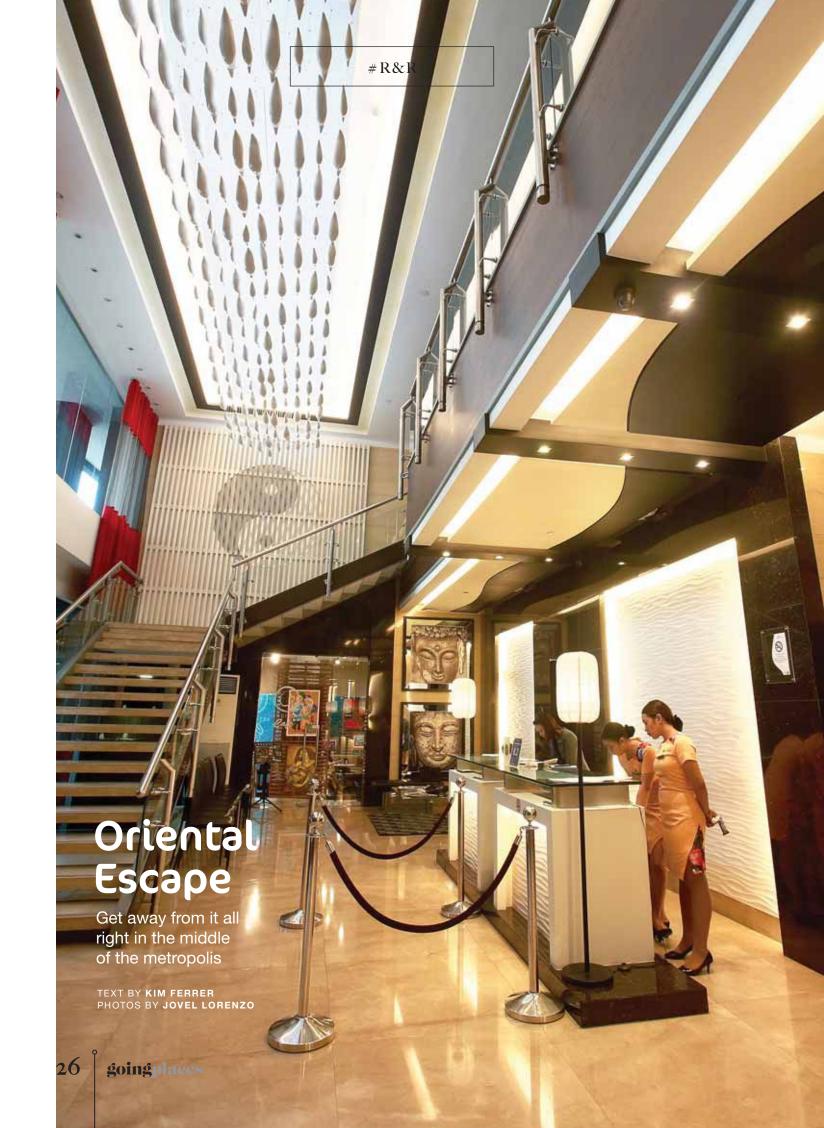
Less popular but worthy of mention is the best public beach in Cebu, Lambog Beach. Also under the municipality, Zaragosa Island, boasts of the longest-managed sanctuary in the country spanning 30 years. RARE is managing a 25-hectare marine protected area consisting of 10 hectare of sea grass and 15 hectare as fish sanctuary.

Changing Behaviors, Changing the Future

With positive reinforcement campaigns like Fish Forever, RARE has set an example on how changing behaviors can forever alter the way local communities value their coastal resources.

If we stop to think long and deep about it, this is the essential key to long-lasting environmental conservation and preservation. Yes, we need to partake of the bounty of the sea; however, we must also be of the mind that there needs to be changes in how we consume and conserve these riches, if we want our present and future generation to enjoy the benefits.

For more information, log on to www.rare.org











onging to have a Zen experience without traveling outside the metro? Y2 Residence Hotel can serve as your weekend getaway and remind you of the beauty of East Asia.

Envisioned by interior designer and media

Envisioned by interior designer and media celebrity Tessa Prieto-Valdes, every corner of the hotel features elegant Asian touches.

An imposing yin-yang symbol, which means balance and harmony, welcomes you at the lobby. This symbol is the inspiration behind the hotel's name as well as the interiors – rooms have a black and white color scheme contrasted by murals painted on the walls such as Japan's cherry blossoms, kokeshi dolls, and figures reminiscent of Imperial China.

The hotel offers a service apartment type of accommodation with a wide selection of room classifications that can accommodate quick staycations as well as longer stays. All rooms include entertainment sets and a kitchenette complete with infrared burner and microwave.

For further relaxation, check out the pool on the roof deck or head to Amare Spa on the 22nd floor and bliss out with one of their wellness programs like Ventosa, traditional massage, and reflexology.

To complete your Asian experience, dine at Pink Panda on the ground floor where you can indulge in Fresh Vietnamese Spring Rolls, Beef Rendang and Laksa.

More info: Y2 Residence Hotel ia at 4687 Santiago Street cor. Valdez and Singian Streets, Makati/ y2hotel.com

#SNAPSHOTS



TEXT BY KATHRINA PAZ ELEFANTE PHOTOS BY JOVEL LORENZO

sia is having a golden moment in and out of Hollywood
– and we say it's about time the rest of the world paid
attention. Asians are taking over runways, pageants
and the big screen – and it's also time for us to be
unapologetic about our roots. Turn the pages for a dose of glitz
and glamour in crazy pops of color.

Gold jumpsuit and accessories, stylist's own



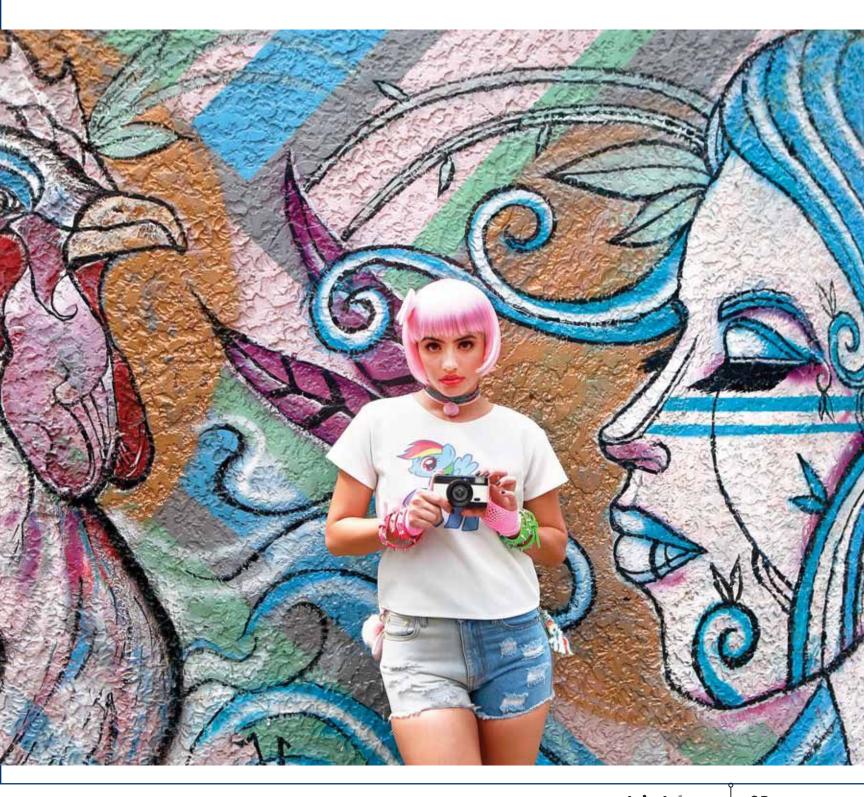


#SNAPSHOTS

MODEL: MISS ECO INTERNATIONAL 2018 CYNTHIA THOMALLA STYLING BY RICK SOTELO HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY JIGS MAYUGA, MYCKE ARCANO & ANGELO TACADENA

Unicorn shirt, denim shorts and accessories, stylist's own

SHOT ON LOCATION AT Y2 RESIDENCE HOTEL, 4687 SANTIAGO STREET COR. VALDEZ AND SINGIAN STREETS, MAKATI CITY







Blazer dress, shoes and earrings, stylist's own

STORE INFO:

Miladay Jewels has stores Trinoma, Alabang Town Center, Glorietta 4 and City of Dreams Manila / miladayjewels.com for the full list of stores



Time for Thia

Eco-princess shares her mission for nutrition & responsible travel

INTERVIEW BY MAE LORRAINE RAFOLS LORENZO
PHOTOS BY JOVEL LORENZO

t's no secret that the Philippines is recently producing some of the most formidable contenders in prestigious beauty pageants. Aside from Miss Universe 2016 Pia Wurtzbach, the Philippines is dominating in other major pageants like Miss World and Miss International (which the country has won in the previous years).

Last issue, we were lucky enough to interview and have on our cover 2018 Miss Earth Karen Ibasco but did you know that we have another eco-princess who is also the reigning queen of another prestigious pageant?

Cynthia 'Thia' Thomalla is currently 2018's Miss Eco International, and just like our previous cover girl, this queen has been traveling a lot to promote the importance of taking care of the environment and its connection to global nutrition.

Here, we get to know more about her travels, her experiences and her drive to make 'going places' a way to let people know more about the mission behind her crown:



Please tell us more about the Miss Eco International pageant and its advocacy.

Miss Eco International started in Egypt 4 years ago and was launched to promote the importance of taking care of the environment and its connection to malnutrition.

Together with the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Institution for the Use of Micro-Algae Spirulina Against Malnutrition or IIMSAM, we're promoting the use of the superfood, spirulina.

Basically, what we believe in is that spirulina, a type of algae, is a great source of protein. So if people use this to create food products, it can help address malnutrition among children. Cultivating spirulina is also environment-friendly because it is abundant and can easily be reproduced, meaning production does not harm the environment unlike other protein sources.

Your crown means that you get to travel to Egypt a lot where most of your projects are based. Have you visited parts of the country that are more for tourists?

I have. When I was still a pageant contestant, we were able to visit famous places like Cairo where the pyramids are located. I would recommend visiting Cairo for only a day and then spending more time in Alexandria and Luxor where people can know more about the culture and history of the country.

How about other places around the world? Have you been to any interesting places lately?

I was born in Germany so I got to travel a lot when I was young. But I've also been to Asian countries like Malaysia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Still, nothing beats my hometown of Southern Leyte. For Philippine destinations, I always love going to Siargao. This year I plan to visit Palawan and Batanes.

How do you make sure that you represent being Miss Eco International while you're traveling?

I make sure that I try to be a good example everywhere I go. I bring metal straws, a tumbler and a ziploc bag with me so I can store my trash if I don't see a garbage bin. I try to be a responsible tourist and make sure to pick up some trash and throw it in the proper containers.

What are your travel essentials?

I'm very simple. I need to have my water tumbler with me anywhere I go and I have to have my sunblock because I have a very sensitive skin.

What is your ideal vacation?

I'm quite adventurous. I don't like malls so I'd rather be outdoors on an adventure because I'm athletic. I sprint and I'm now training for my first triathlon. I can't go to a place and just stay there overnight. I need at least 2 to 5 days to explore the place.



#WANDERLUST

Royalty Roster

Step into Asian palaces filled with stories and ceremonies

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ESTAN CABIGAS

sia is no stranger to royalty. Like other continents with old civilizations, there have always been kingdoms governing malleable borders. Depending on the sophistication and strength of the domain's rulers, they either have expanded their territory or have shrunk and been gobbled up by another.

Asian history is rich with stories of royal exploits and defeats. The rise of a rajah coincided with the downfall of another. Ambitions, intrigues and rivalries have shaped many of these Asian kingdoms.

But after European colonization and well into modern times, many of these monarchies have either gone to oblivion, relegated to ceremonial positions or, in the case of unconquered Thailand and Japan, still have its royalty intact and giving sway over their subjects.





For the traveler, visiting these countries with strong royal traditions are a delight, giving a peek to a rich culture and an interesting and fascinating way of life through ceremonies, architecture and heritage.

The following are 5 not so mainstream royal palaces from around Asia. These include palaces which are still being used by the Royal Family and some which have become museums or functions as both.



ROYAL PALACE, PHNOM PENH

It was only in the middle of the 19th century when then King Norodom made Phnom Penh the capital of Cambodia and the Royal Palace was constructed in the 1860s. From then on, it has been the royal residence.

The palace complex has several structures built, torn down then replaced with other buildings over the decades with the latest construction up till the 60s. Its architecture is mainly Khmer with European touches. It's where royal coronations and mournings have been done and where the king entertains guests. About half of the royal palace grounds is open to the public.





With the introduction of Islam, the remnant states became sultanates with one, the Sultanate of Deli in Sumatra, taking shape in what is now Medan in Indonesia during the Dutch colonial period.

Istana Maimun, or the Royal Palace of the Sultanate of Deli, was constructed between 1887-1891 by Sultan Ma'mun Al Rashid Perkasa Alamyah. It has an interesting architecture of Malay style with touches of Islamic and Indian and interiors filled with Spanish and Italian furniture.

While the royal family of the current Sultan resides here, open areas have been converted into a museum including the royal hall and throne room accessible to the public.





PHRA RAM RATCHANIWET

Phra Ram Ratchaniwet is a royal palace in Phetchaburi, around 2 hours from Bangkok. It was built in 1910 by King Chulalongkorn as an alternative to Phra Nakhon Khiri which was constructed atop a hill a few kilometers north. Unlike the palace complex in the Thai capital, the massive 2-storey structure's architecture is in the German Art Nouveau style which was fashionable at that time. A very European building in an Asian tropical country, it's now a museum.





ANDERLUST













KYOTO GOSHO

The Kyoto Imperial Palace is the official residence of the Emperor in this part of Japan. Kyoto is the country's capital for the longest time.

Enclosed within a rectangular area is a series of buildings and gardens that are mostly open to the public. Although dating back to the early Edo Period (1603-1868), the palace has been built and rebuilt, as much as 8 times with the current structure rebuilt in 1855.

The Kyoto Gosho became less important when the Emperor transferred official functions to Tokyo.









#WANDERLUST











Anyone who's into extreme activities associates Macau with bungy jumping. The Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre, which measures 338 meters

(1,109 feet) in height from the ground to the highest point is home to the world's highest commercial bungy jump operated by A.J. Hackett.

Most visitors come to admire the view from the observation deck, but if you have cash to burn, you can tick several bucket list activities here including the Bungy Jump, Skywalk (where you get to walk outside the tower), Skyjump (a controlled descent where you jump off the tower with a wire cable) and the Tower Climb (where you conquer Macau's highest spire by climbing 100 meters up the mast's vertical ladders).

Their full Bungy Jump package, which includes the tower ticket, jump itself, certificate, exclusive T-shirt and video and photos saved in a USB will cost you over P20,000. The Combo package for the Bungy Jump and Skywalk costs roughly US\$551 or more than P27,000!

One of the perks of covering AirAsia's Crazy Jump Day 2017 in Macau meant selected media people would get to experience the activities. I volunteered as tribute immediately. No way was I going to pass up the chance to do these for free!

The Skywalk offered a leisurely stroll around the outer perimeter of the tower. It was really cool to be able to stand and sit on the walkway and get unobstructed views of the whole of Macau.

There aren't any handrails when you walk, but you're attached to 2 safety harnesses the whole time. If you're not afraid of heights, you can easily do it. You can just relax outdoors, enjoy the view and take all the photos you want in crazy poses with your feet dangling.

For adrenaline junkies, the highlight of the Macau tower is

really bungy jumping, which involves leaping from the tower's platform and experiencing the ultimate free fall.

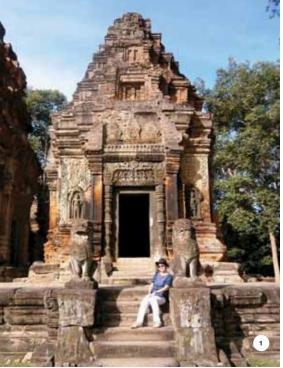
The AJ Hackett Tower Macau is currently the Guinness World Record title holder for the highest commercial bungy jump in the world. At 233 meters or 764 feet high, this system makes use of specially designed bungy cord, guide cables, and recovery system, making the whole process very safe.

The guide cables system ensures you do not make contact with the tower and enable bungy jumps to happen in nearly all weather conditions.

It's just one of those adventures you must try at least once in your life. Watching everyone else jump before you will fill you with an exhilarating sense of dread and excitement. Looking down and seeing the sheer height you'll be dropping from the ledge can be terrifying but once you conquer that fear and step off, you'll get a glimpse of what it's like to fly.

It's over in a few seconds, but that moment will be frozen in your memory. It's a crazy, insane rush! \oplus

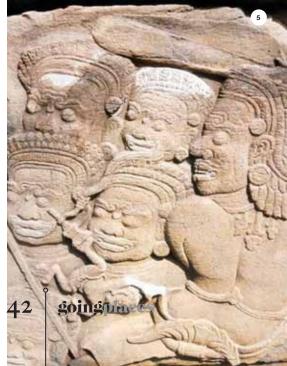














Reverence in Ruins

The first capital of the Khmer Empire beckons with renewed energy

BY ALICE SUN-CUA

y husband and I visited a village called Roluos, about 12 km. from Siem Riep, to visit some of the oldest temples in the area. We took a tuktuk whose driver was friendly and spoke good English. If we wanted to see the temples at Roluos, he said, he will bring us to Preah Ko first, and meet a local hero named Dy Proeng.

Intrigued, we assented and after about half an hour, he deposited us by the roadside and pointed to a cluster of native huts huddled under the morning sun. What caught our eyes were table top models made to scale of Angkor Wat, the Bayon temples, and the temple across the street, Preah Ko.

As we marveled at the beautiful craftsmanship of the miniature clay renditions, an elderly man in a baseball cap approached us. He introduced himself as Dy Proeung, and told us to feel free to look around, as he had many other clay figures for sale.

He showed us many wall-sized diagrams, and pointed out the scales that he used to make his models. He spoke gently, and even in his humble jacket, loose pants and rubber flip flops, he spoke with quiet confidence.

We later discovered that he was a graduate of architecture from the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh and then worked at the Angkor Conservation and École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO). He was honored and given due recognition by King Sihanouk himself. We got some carved stones for souvenirs, happy for this occasion to have met him.

Roluos was formerly called Harihalaraya, the capital of the Khmer Empire during the 9th century. There were 3 existing groups: the Preah Ko, Bakong, and Lolei Temples. Because of time, many of the edifices were in ruins, but restoring and rebuilding were continuously done with the help of other countries like Japan and Germany, and many times experts volunteered their help.

The Preah Ko (Sacred Bull) temple, like the other temples of the Roluos group, was built with bricks and sandstones, and was the oldest. The stone bulls, which looked very weathered and

couldn't be distinguished except for their legs, sat and guarded the temples. There were 6 temples, with 3 each in 2 rows. These were built by the king of the time, for himself and his family's worship.

A few minutes away was the Bakong temple group. This was built in 5 concentric levels, not unlike Borobudur in Indonesia. Sacred elephants guarded each corner of the levels, and the ascending stone steps were certainly made for long, strong legs: they must have been more than a foot high, giving us a good cardiovascular workout under the almost-noonday sun.

There were a lot of local children around the temple, some were selling postcards, although most of them were just sitting around and playing with their friends. They accompanied us to the top temple, and their round eyes and friendly smiles certainly made the morning complete.

We wanted to see the Lolei group as well, but our tuktuk driver reminded us of our visit to Thiem's House, a local art gallery and shop in Siem Riep, so we hied off and enjoyed the beautiful and tranquil place with a bamboo garden, and took time to look at the exquisite paintings, sculptures and art pieces in the shop. •

The author at one of the Preah Ko temples.
 The author's husband at the approach to Bakong.
 Children playing at the temple grounds.
 A smiling Apsara statue holding a lotus stalk.
 Close-up of the carvings depicting heroes of Hindu mythology in Bakong.
 One of the Bakong temples in ruins



Going There:

Airlines like AirAsia fly to Phnom Penh from Manila while Jetstar has flights from Manila to Siem Reap. Siem Reap is closer to Roluos and travel time takes about 2 hours by car.

Going Further:

If you get hungry, visit The Hut Natural, a countryside restaurant that offers Cambodian dishes made with locally harvested and organic ingredients about 2 km. away from the Roluos temples. Aside from dining, guests can also learn and watch basket-weaving and silk spinning.



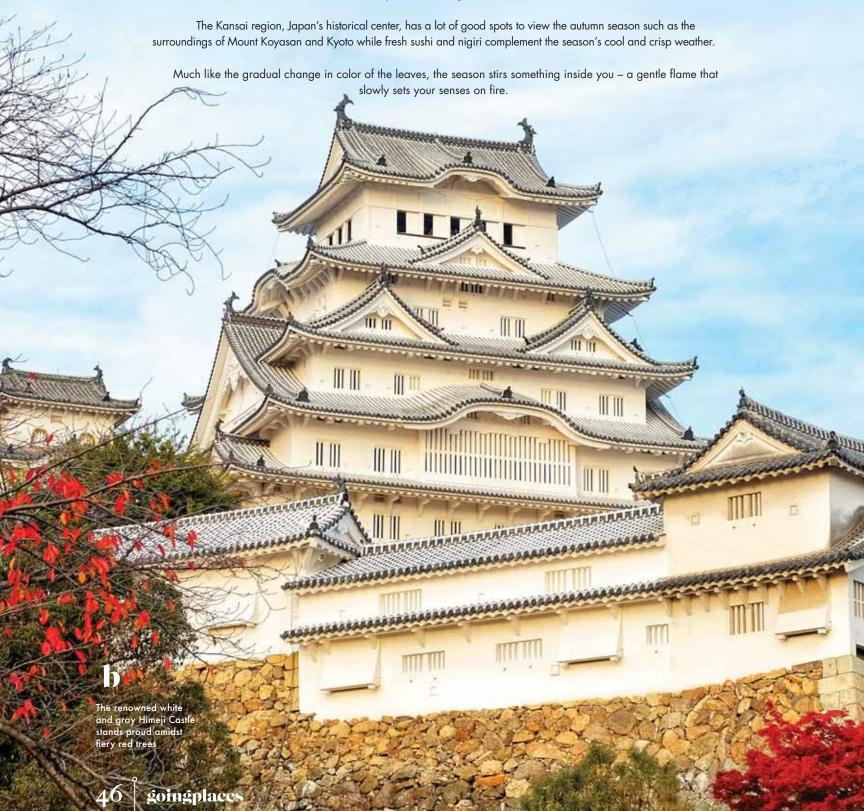


#SNAPSHOTS

Each season comes as a pleasant surprise to anyone visiting Japan. Winter brings about the pureness of the surroundings, spring ushers hope with the blooming of the cherry blossoms, and summer makes everything bright with green foliage and sunny weather.

And then there is autumn: the bright red, maroon, orange, and yellow colors of this season bring about a deliciously warm and an ironically mellow energy.

Personally, I think it is the most spectacular among the 4 seasons. It is this time that nature showcases its true beauty – a perfect testament to how magnificent our Creator's design is. It's a wonder how the greenest of leaves turn into shades of red to yellow to orange without human intervention.





C. A sampler of tuna nigiri from the leanest cut to the fattest one. As the pink color of the meat becomes lighter, the fatter the meat gets.

D. The tall bamboo trees of Arashiyama Park creates a cool and quiet environment away from the hustle of the city. E. A normal sight in Japan during the autumn season where the grounds are covered with yellow ginko and dark red maple autumn leaves. F. A small torii gate is dwarfed behind tall trees in one of the parks of Mount Koyasan



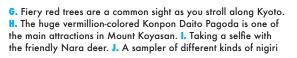














#SNAPSHOTS It is this time that nature showcases its true beauty – perfect testament to how magnificent our Creator's design is W. going

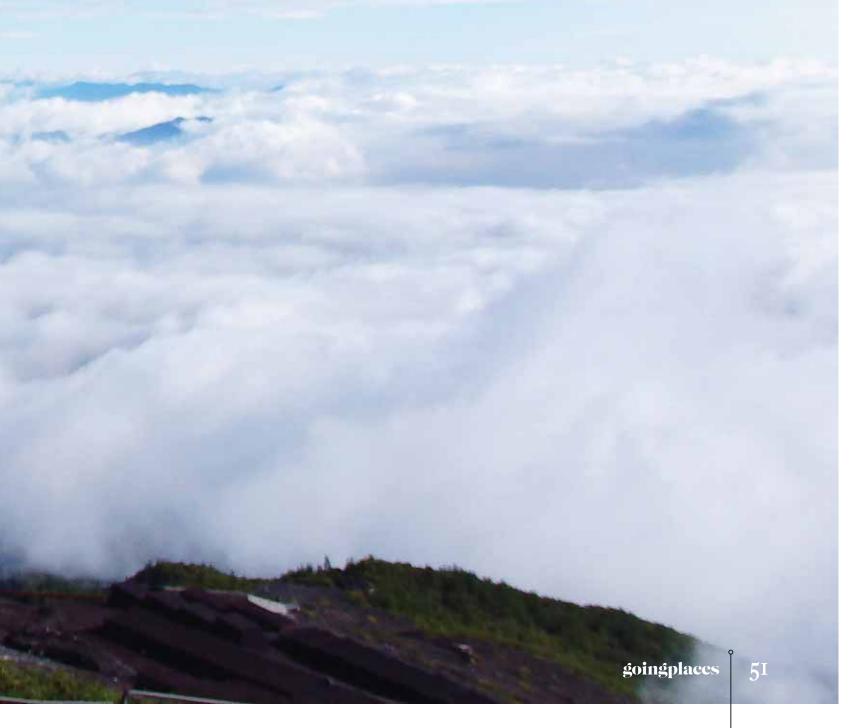


Walking with the clouds, I stopped to catch my breath every 10 – sometimes 5 – steps as Mt. Fuji's well-defined gravel trail became steeper than the 20-degree slopes which the websites said. My 2 trekking sticks dug deeply into the ground like extra legs to extend my stride. Oxygen from a handy can powered my lungs — and cleared my head.

I was huffing and puffing like the Big Bad Wolf who blew the houses of the Three Little Pigs. But out there in the bare landscape of Mt. Fuji from the 6th Station, it would be the wind that would blow anything away – including one's confidence to reach a mountain hut where an overpriced cup noodle, a tatami mat, and a clean toilet, waited.

Hordes of climbers walked briefly alongside me, all with longer strides and tougher lungs, they quickly left me behind. Most were in big groups of 20 to 30, fully dressed for a long hike, following guides who looked like Pied Pipers leading a pack of unsuspecting tourists.

AROUND US, THE CLOUDS
SWIRLED LIKE COTTON
CANDY, LIKE A VEIL THAT
SOFTENED THE ZIG-ZAG
GRAVEL TRAIL. UNDER
US, THE LANDSCAPE HAD
TURNED INTO A SEA
OF CLOUDS — AN
AMAZING SIGHT!







300,000 CLIMBERS A YEAR

According to the official Japan tourism websites, there are now more than 300,000 foreign visitors from all around the world who climb Mt. Fuji every year. A quick look at the internet will show a list of travel companies offering 2-day Mt. Fuji guided climbs for about 40,000 yen for each person for groups, and about 90,000 yen each for 2 climbers. (Roughly, the Philippine peso equivalent is about half of the Japanese yen.)

Nothing is cheap in a Mt. Fuji climb. A small bottled water, cup noodle, coffee in the smallest paper cup costs 500 yen each (about P250); use of toilet is 200 yen (P100); a space to sleep is 7,800 yen (about P3,900) with 2 meals on weekdays and 11,000 yen on weekends.

But the mountain continues to attract serious and leisure climbers – even just curious tourists. We met a few dressed for the park – in flat shoes and thin clothing – shivering and giggling on their way down from the 7th station.

GOOD JOB, GOOD JOB!

Among the trekkers were lines of Japanese students likely in high school, some even younger. I cannot imagine myself ever allowing my kid at that age to join a climbing expedition, but hey, that is the famous Mt. Fuji and it's in Japan where streets – and mountains – are safe environments.

I passed a long line of students squatting along the trail and smiled as they nodded and murmured some sort of greeting. It was only towards the end of the line when I understood what those "greetings" said: "Good job! Good job!"

I was amused that of all the English words to bring to the mountain, their teacher had chosen "good job!" But it had some wisdom in it. What do you say to hikers speaking all kinds of languages?



SO MANY TREKKERS

Truthfully, I have never seen that many trekkers in one place before. Or heard that many dialects around me in a mountain. From the trailhead at the 5th Station, hundreds of them, most who had just exited the trail, huddled in groups, a few fast asleep on the cement ground. Many more hikers stood either listening to a group leader, doing stretching exercises, fixing backpacks – all whiling away time for the hour recommended to acclimatize their bodies to the 2,300 meter above sea level (MASL) altitude.

By sunrise tomorrow morning, after a few hours of rest in a mountain hut, most of them will be at the summit – at 3,776 MASL. The stronger hikers will likely do a "bullet climb" – ascending to the summit and then descending on the same day.

JUST 7TH

My intention was neither. The fear that a doctor had planted in my mind shortly before I left took away my daring nature. I had cancelled my reservation at a mountain hut at 3,100 MASL and settled for one at the 7th Station at 2,700 MASL. The summit, or what is the 10th station, although I have never heard it being referred as that, is 3,776 MASL.

Literally, I had lowered my conquest plan so that there would be no over-exertion, as the doctor advised. Climbing to 2,700 MASL was almost like the same as reaching the summit of Mt. Pulag, which I had climbed many times.

Two hours into the trek, the sight of mountain huts came into view – so far above us, they looked like rough artists' sketches. Below that "sketch" was about a thousand zigzag trails defined by steel fences that kept the landslides away.

It did not seem that far. The man at the 6th station said water was at the 7th station, only an hour and a half away! I thought that





MY DREAM CLIMB

I did not complain. A generation late perhaps, but I was on my dream climb on Mt. Fuji, the highest mountain in Japan. My legs were not tired; I was not hungry. And I had "good" cardiovascular fitness level from my stress test.

MEETING THE MOUNTAIN

The sky was downcast, some rain showers came and went failing to drench our waterproof jackets. When the rain stopped the winds agitated sand that got into our eyes, we had to put on our masks. When the wind blew colder air, we put on our fleece jackets under our rain jackets and then donned our thick gloves. The temperature continued to dip as we climbed higher — from 12-degrees Celsius at the 5th Station, it was 5-degrees when we got to the 7th. And the wind! To a lowlander like me, it felt like a storm was brewing.

Around us, the clouds swirled like cotton candy, like a veil that softened the zig-zag gravel trail. Under us, the landscape had turned into a sea of clouds – an amazing sight!

For me, there was absolutely no reason to complain! In the mountain I am an old woman without mood swings. I could have just stood there and feel happy.

LAVA ROCKS TRAIL

My mood only dipped when we got to the part that I feared — the trail on lava rocks which had no defined steps, you just had to find a rock indention that could fit your large mountain shoes.

I viewed that stretch on YouTube many times and worried about it. Carlos said it was like allowing a few meters of difficult trail take away the beautiful experience of the kilometers of hiking. He was right.

I got to the the lava rocks and without analyzing the challenge, I just stepped on it and literally took one step at a time, planting





my trekking poles on firm ground to help me haul my weight up. Slow and steady, steady and slow, that's the way to go – I recalled the rhyme that Goofy had followed to win a race in a Micky Mouse book I used to read to Carlos when he was 2 years old!

A steep incline of stone steps, each step about a foot high, came after the lava rocks. I hardly paused to catch my breath – it was the last leg to reach the 7th Station!

A SENIOR FEAT

For me, it was a feat! Carlos, who avoids any physical contact in public gave me a hug and a kiss. He was clearly elated that I had reached my planned conquest level for that climb. As a treat we purchased one cup noodle (about P250) and savored the aroma the hot water released. With the sea of clouds at our backs, we savored the best tasting cup noodles 2,700 meters above sea level!

SHARING SLEEPING SPACE

We decided to stay the night at the mountain hut where we had enjoyed the noodles and the use of their very clean toilets.

No one spoke English there, except for Hiroshi, who said he knew a "little English." He showed us to our space, up in the attic, where 2 rows of tatami mats with thick blankets, and a tiny pillow made of beans (not foam) waited for the tired climbers.

The websites had prepared us for the mountain hut experience as "just a place to rest on the way to the summit." It was an experience that I had looked forward to. First, I have never in my life yet slept in a room with male strangers. And second, I do eat beef curry but I did that there because there were no other choices.

Hiroshi escorted us to the end of the attic room where I had the wall beside me and Carlos on my right side. We had our "private space" for the night. A mat away, 4 climbers were asleep, another was just settling in, 2 were reviewing photos on their iPads, and the one closest to us was reading a book!





THE SUMMIT NEXT YEAR!

Carlos and I had agreed that he would proceed to the summit at 1 a.m. and go back to me about 12 hours later. But with the physical arrangement, I was uneasy about being left in a room with sleeping strangers. Without hesitation, Carlos said he would forego the summit assault, and come back next year for that.

With that solved, he turned and fell fast asleep, his heavy breathing assuring me that I had a "wall" that separated me from the strangers.

But I could not sleep! Perhaps I had an overdose of oxygen, or the high altitude's low oxygen level was affecting me. With the strong WiFi signal all around the mountain, I "talked" to my children, friends and to my boss over messenger and Viber.

SUNRISE - FROM ANY MOUNTAIN
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TAKES MY BREATH AWAY! THE
SCENE OF WATCHING COMPLETE
DARKNESS SURRENDER TO LIGHT
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SUNRISE!

Finally, I checked the internet for the time of sunrise, and set my alarm 30 minutes before that. It was a very restless sleep to sunrise.

No one was awake when my alarm sounded. I went down to the main hall and woke Hiroshi, who was asleep on a tatami mat near the front door.

He stood up, and in a minute, the whole house was awake. The climbers who were sleeping in the same attic room appeared at the landing where the sun slowly rose over most awesome sight of a sea of clouds!

Sunrise – from any mountain – is a majestic view that takes my breath away! The scene of watching complete darkness surrender to light on top of a sea of clouds is a spiritual experience. It is a strong statement that God exists!

Even with the sleepless night, I felt the energy of a brand new day! I savored the excitement of just standing 2,700 meters above sea level, on a mountain that's so far away from my home — me, a senior citizen at least a generation away from about 90 percent of the climbers on Mt. Fuji!

HOW TO DO THIS:

4 YEARS OF WISHING

y dream to climb that mountain started 4 years ago, but the climbing season had closed when business took me to Tokyo. So Carlos and I went to the 5th Station to trek the Ochudo Trail and to the forest in nearby Kawaguchico town.

I planned to go back the next year, but my athletic brother, who would have been my climbing buddy, suddenly needed an angioplasty.

The following year, in 2017, we were in Tokyo and again, the trails were closed. Instead, we — my children Jacklyn Anne, Carlos, and me — climbed Mt. Toyama in Nikko, a beautiful forest of cedar trees shooting straight up like pencils. At the summit, we viewed the autumn foliage, a tourist attraction in the area.

When 2018 started, I saw the odds piling up against my dream climb – I'm a senior citizen; Mt. Fuji is no less than P100,000 away from where I live; I needed 6 days of vacation leave credits to get away from work; and I needed a personal trainer to help prepare my body for the trek.

But fueled by pure adventure and an absurd desire to keep on trekking while I can do it, I willed it to happen in 2018.

Cebu Pacific flights

Cebu Pacific Air was then offering Manila to Tokyo (Narita) and back only for about P17,000 with 20-kilo baggage. We were ready to settle into very tight seating arrangements and were pleasantly surprised at the wide body plane with 3-3-3-seat rows configuration.

The Cebu Pacific flights offer an affordable way for climbers to take Mt. Fuji. In fact, there were other climbers on the flight home with us, their stamped walking sticks at Mt. Fuji rolling out of the baggage carousel!

Read all about it

I read everything I could find about the climb in many websites. Very helpful information came from the book – *Climbing Mt. Fuj*i by Richard Reay – which I ordered from Amazon.com, even paying for special delivery to get the book to me in 4 days. (I read that book 3 times and followed all of the tips the author gave – including the exercises.)

My virtual guide

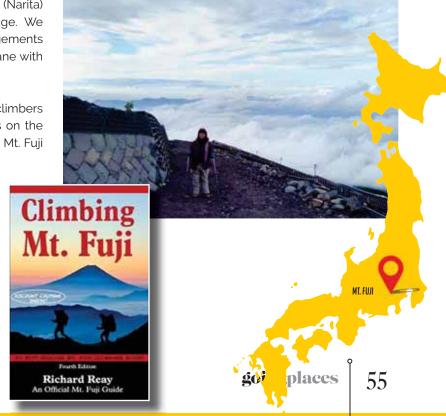
The most helpful information came from a virtual guide – Mazamori Shimizu from the Yamanashi tourism organization (www.yamanashi-kankou.jp/english/index.html).

I corresponded with him many times through kankou@ yamanashi-sk.jp on many queries about the trails, the weather, mountain hut reservations, even my anxieties on making the climb, at my age. (I suggest that one who is just thinking of climbing Mt. Fuji should contact him.)

He replied to each email immediately and through that "bond," I trusted his advice. I asked if I could cancel my mountain hut reservation at the 8th station if I feel altitude sickness while at the 7th station. His reply: 'Why not reserve at the 7th station?' I asked if I could handle the trails, being a senior citizen. He sent me links showing videos of the trail. I asked about the weather. He sent links to check the mountain weather from different elevations.

Finally, I asked if I could go back the same trail I ascended (there is another descending trail), in case I felt I could not do it. He replied: 'Of course. But you can do it.'

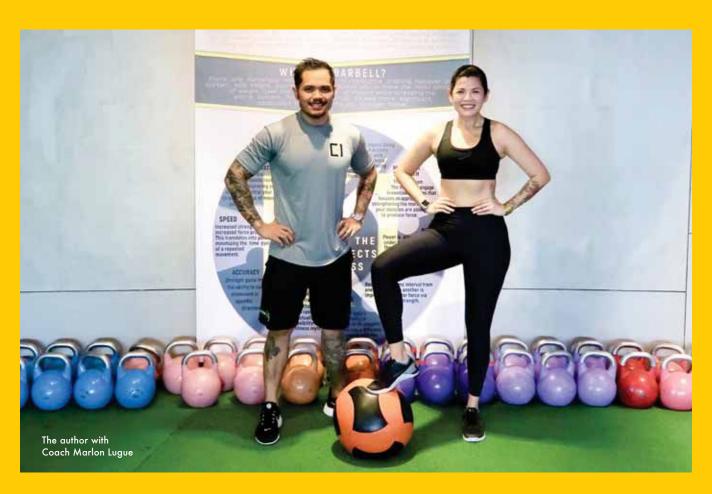
Mt. Fuji is thousands of kilometers away from me, yet I felt like I knew it so well when the day came for me to step into its trail which looked familiar because of people like Mazamori and the yamanashi-kankou website. Definitely, I will be back to make the summit before I'm 70!



#GOODVIBES



FIT FOR TRAVEL BY RINA SANTOS



Journey to Fitness

How exciting is it to go on adventures, see different places, bask under the sun, eat exotic and local food?

But mention the word 'travel' to some parents with young kids and you'll get a do-you-even-know-what-you're-talking-about stare that would scare even the most adventurous person. The whole dynamics of traveling changes when we have children. There are more things to consider like looking for kid-friendly places, logistics, packing, and the dreaded flights (don't even get me started with long haul flights). As tiring as it is, I wouldn't change it for the world.

We realized our love for travel way before our daughter Rafa came to our lives, but surprising as it seems, our travels became more frequent after having her. It was a mutual decision to include her everywhere we go. We wanted her to see and experience everything with us.

We did everything from sleepless long flights, hauling her stroller everywhere, packing and unpacking quite a few luggage, washing and sterilizing milk bottles, etc. The level of tiredness was overwhelming.

After a few trips, we developed a system and divided the responsibilities. I also finally acknowledged the fact that I needed to improve my strength if I wanted to keep up, a minor price to pay for something we love to do.

This prompted my fitness journey 4 years ago. As a mom, it's one of the best investments I've ever given myself. It takes time, discipline and dedication but you reap so much more at the end. You gain self-respect, strength and most of all energy to play and keep up with your little ones even after a long day of walking tours.

I've been working with Coach Marlon Lugue, head coach of Kinetix Lab, from day 1 for strength training. It was my first time to work with weights when I started training. You know what they say about weights that it will bulk you up? Nope, not really.

With proper guidance, it will make you look and feel stronger and improve your metabolism.

Here are Coach Marlon's 5 best workout routines:



LOAD CARRIES

Think of carrying heavy luggage on both hands or shopping bags. Those 20 kgs. will feel light as a feather in no time. This routine strengthens and improves metabolic conditioning, which means you burn calories even after your workout.



It strengthens the entire upper body and keeps your shoulder joints healthy. This will give you the extra strength when keeping things above

head level from your kids (think heavy iPad, laptop, or cookie jar).



DEADLIFTS

It's intimidating at first but it strengthens your lower back, hence reducing and managing lower back pain. Imagine picking up and carrying your baby without pain for days? I carried Rafa for what felt like forever and this routine is my savior.



SQUATS

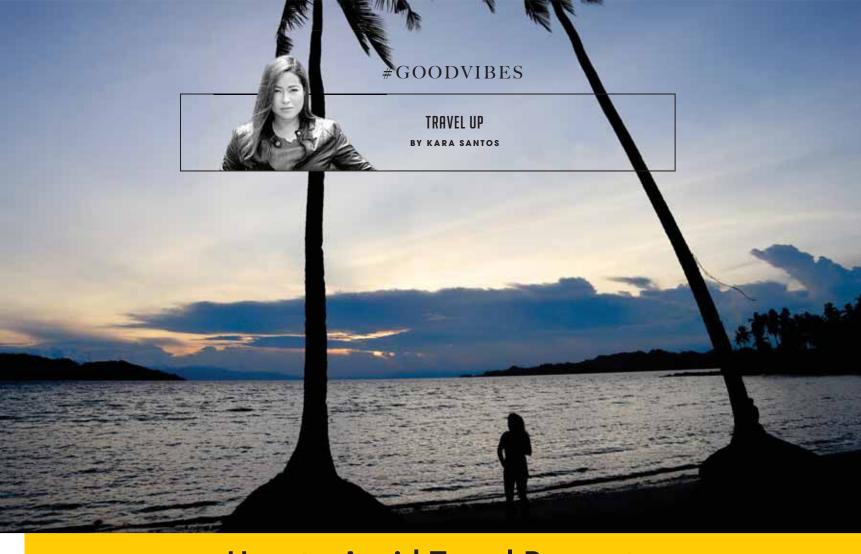
It strengthens the entire lower body with added benefit of engaging the core. It doesn't hurt that it also makes your legs and butt look good mommies!



PLANKS

Ahh! the dreaded planks. Whoever said time runs fast never tried doing planks. Sure, it hurts to the core (pun intended) but it most definitely strengthens your entire mid-section and arms. With proper execution, this will help you every time you lift something, say your baby's stroller.

With consistency, these routines really helped me a lot in my daily life and it can help you, too. You can even improvise on these workouts when you travel. Use water bottles for overhead press, luggage and stroller for deadlift and load carries, and you can do squats and planks in your hotel rooms anytime. Get started now and you'll be booking those family trips in no time!



How to Avoid Travel Burnout



These days, travel has become a competition of kilometers clocked and sights ticked off a bucket list. The social media rat race has turned it into a contest of racking up likes, Instagram-worthy destinations, selfies, OOTDs, and filters and less about meaningful experiences, the travel destination or the people you meet.

Travel is something I really love but I admit that some trips have started to feel meaningless. I took some time to go on a solo trip to assess why I was feeling this way and how I can change it. Here are some of tips that help me keep the wanderlust alive:

1. Slow down

Trying to cram too many activities in a day can make trips feel like work rather than a vacation. One way to counter this is to slow down. If you've been hopping from plane to train to bus every other day, try staying put in one place.

If you've been accepting trip assignments that leave you only a couple of hours at home before heading to the airport again, pick the places you really want to go to and sit the rest out.

For those who travel for work, if you have time to spare, pad a day or two before or after official work duties so you have time to rest.

2. Disconnect

Often, we're fixated with getting the perfect souvenir shot and sharing everything constantly on social media. Some people don't even stop to look at the view anymore without their phones.

I've become used to whirlwind media tours where we're usually taken to all the top tourist spots to maximize our visit. Getting to and from the airport, hours in transit, dealing with flight delays, navigating cities for the first time and following a strict itinerary can be overwhelming.

Find a scenic spot or haven of natural beauty in the mountains, river or lake to enjoy the surroundings and unplug.

On a recent personal trip, I just spent a blissful afternoon on a hammock by the beach (where there was no Wi-Fi) doing absolutely nothing.

It may seem like a waste of time, but it can be a form of meditation. This helps you clear and refresh your mind.

3. Connect with friends and family

Travel loneliness can contribute to burnout. For solo travelers who get to experience new things, it's sad that we can't share the experience with those we care about.

Traveling also means giving up attending important occasions like birthdays and family dinners. Take the time to travel with family while you can, enjoy weekend road trips or short staycations if schedules don't match.

If you're traveling elsewhere, meet up with relatives or friends who live in the area. Ask for their recommendations on good places to eat or visit and chances are, they'll invite you to meet up.

4. Travel with a purpose

If touristy sightseeing has started to feel meaningless, maybe

REMEMBER WHY YOU
STARTED TRAVELING IN
THE FIRST PLACE. ASK
YOURSELF WHAT PART OF
THE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE
MAKES YOU MOST HAPPY
AND DO MORE OF THAT.
WHEREVER YOU GO, STAY
TRUE TO YOURSELF.
FIND THOSE MOMENTS
OF TRAVEL MAGIC THAT
GIVE YOU JOY

you can find ways to do good or make an impact when you travel. There are plenty of opportunities for volunteering while you travel.

You can join outreach programs like coastal clean-ups, feeding programs and donation drives where you get to immerse with communities or help the environment.

If you're on your own, you can find a local charity where you can volunteer your time or skills. Bringing simple items like pencils or books for local schools or medicines to remote communities when you hike can give another dimension to hiking trips.

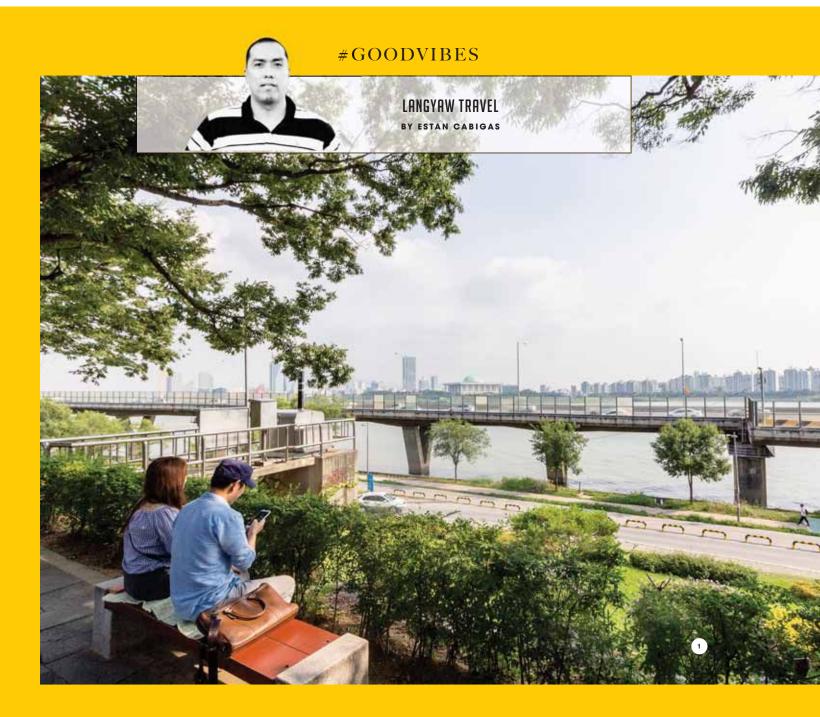
Turning the lens, connecting and share stories of people you meet can feel more meaningful than simply posting a selfie shot in front of a landmark.

5. Go back to your roots

Remember why you started traveling in the first place. Ask yourself what part of the travel experience makes you most happy and do more of that.

These days, there are a lot of expectations for travel influencers, especially if trips are sponsored.

Wherever you go, stay true to yourself. Find those moments of travel magic that give you joy. Follow your heart instead of the guidebooks and travel trends. You'll come out of your trip much happier.



Finding Serenity in Seoul's 'Beheading Mountain'

The breeze was cool and comforting as I gazed at the Han River, enjoying a quiet afternoon at a promontory with great views of this part of Mapo District in Seoul.

The trees, rustling gently, provided much needed shade while the sound of birds and vehicles passing the motorway merged.

Although serene and peaceful, Jeoldu-san, as the place is known, has a dark history going back to the 19th century when Catholics were being persecuted. In fact, Jeoldu-san literally means 'beheading mountain', when it was used in the 1860s to execute Catholic Koreans during the regency of Heungseon Heonui

Daewonwang, better known as The Daewongun (Prince of the Great Court) during the rule of the Joseon Dynasty. He was known for his isolationist policy: "No treaties, no trade, no Catholics, no West, and no Japan." This was the reason that blood flowed and covered this hill.

Today, it's a great place to commune with nature and take a break from frenetic Seoul. Its expansive gardens and lonely benches provide respite. The well-cemented paths leading you around quiet pockets of lush greenery is a haven. Around are interesting modern religious sculptures that add to the solemnity.

At the top of the hill is the Jeoldu-san Martyr's Shrine and Museum where the Catholic Mass is also celebrated at the chapel. A few meters down the hill is a memorial to the Byeonin Persecution of 1866, marked with sculptured stones atop a flight of steps, which Pope John Paul II visited in 1984.

But Jeoldu-san is not just about the shrine. Adjacent is the remnant of the Yanghwajin Military Base built in 1754 to guard the capital city looking over the Hangang Waterway. It's only the stone foundations that are left on the site, now converted into a park. The name Yanghwajin literally means 'willow flower ferry dock' and refers to an important and strategic transportation point during the Joseon Dynasty.

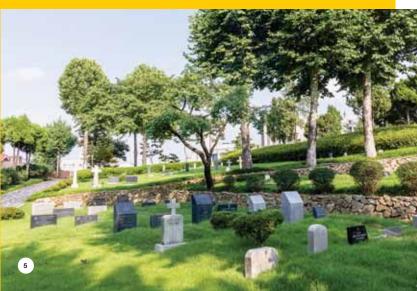
Several meters from the base ruins is the Yanghwajin Foreign Missionary Cemetery, established in the 1890s at the request of the Americans who asked for a burial site for missionaries. Today, several missionaries and their families who evangelized during the late 19th century up to the end of the Japanese Invasion are interred here, including a Filipino. American soldiers who helped in the liberation of Korea from the Japanese are also buried here.

Yanghwajin and Jeoldu-san are not popular tourist sites compared to the traditional palaces and villages in Seoul but it's also a good place, especially for Christian Koreans, to reflect and have a deeper understanding of the history of the Christian faith in this part of Asia.

IT'S A GREAT PLACE
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THAT ADD TO THE
SOLEMNITY



1. A couple enjoying an afternoon at one of the benches with a view of the Han River. 2. Monument to St. Kim Taegon Andrew amidst lush greenery. He is the patron saint of Korea and the first Korean Catholic priest. 3. The Byeonin Persecution of 1866 Memorial erected on its centenary, which Pope John Paul II visited in 1984. 4. Remnants of the Yanghwajin Military Base built in 1754 with modern buildings in the background. 5. At the Yanghwajin Foreign Missionary Cemetery; a Filipino is also interred here





Forest Bathing

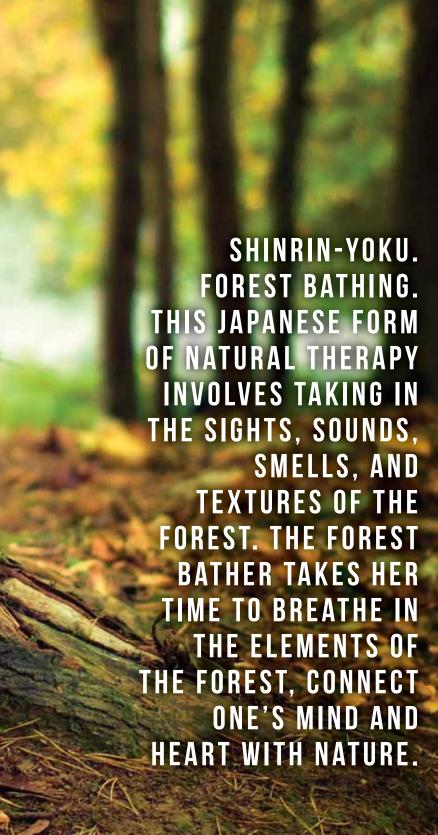
There are no long views in Arroceros Forest Park. Covering just 2.2 hectares of land at the foot of Quezon Bridge in Manila, there are no wide, endless horizons. Instead, a thick growth of tropical flora: some 61 species of trees and around 8,000 kinds of ornamental plants crowd out the narrow footpaths. "Masukal" would best describe one's first impressions.

I follow the narrow paths that crawl about the property like a random root system. Dried yellow leaves, pea-sized black fruits, and small, fragile lilac-tinted neem blossoms litter the uneven concrete pavers. The recent days of monsoon rain has caused the soil to erode and now rich brown loam has caked over parts of the winding walkways.

Shinrin-yoku. Forest bathing. This Japanese form of natural therapy involves taking in the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of the forest. The forest bather takes her time to breathe in the elements of the forest, connect one's mind and heart with nature. The pace is slow, gadget-free, and intuitive. The bather can decide when she is done. One may come out realizing how our modern urban life has detached us so much from the inherent healing abilities of the earth, and therefore poor health.

But the ultimate result is to come away with a clearer head. At least, that is one of my goals for this midweek morning. There are parks that are closer to where I live. But today, I wanted to cocoon myself in a thick, "masukal" blanket of green. Without the hassles of driving out of town.

A dense cover of vegetation rises above and around. Wide, glossy leaves contrast with long and slender ones in all shades of green. The buttress roots of the older ficus or balete trees undulate from their trunks like the skirt of a ball gown. Their thick leaves mingle with frail acacia and others in the canopy above. The crisp scent of the plants mingles with the heady aroma emanating from the damp soil and the still, grass-choked man-made pools. The midday sun blares down relentlessly in a rare break during this this rainy season. But the canopy cools the ground, casting soft shadows.



The past weeks of relentless rain and flood moistens the skin.

To one side, a growth of bamboo quivers as birds flit between the tops of the reeds. The bird calls make up a strange auditory mix: some high-pitched and melodious, while others let out a throaty gurgle.

One may notice the scrunch of dried leaves and twigs underfoot or the scrape of rubber soles on stone. Or the muffled rumble of the nearby LRT and the siren of a passing ambulance right outside the perimeter walls. The buzz of innumerable hiding insects layer over these individual sounds.

And then the tinny squeal of microphone feedback: "Good morning po! So, magsisimula na po tayo sa programa natin!," calls out a hoarse yet lively male voice.

A small tree planting activity commences. Small groups of three or four comprised of local park and Department of Education employees, as well as students scatter about the property, holding seedlings aloft. They dig, dig, dig to the sound of pop dance music blasting through the P.A. system. This is the Philippines, after all. As the song goes, planting may not be fun, but a peppy song can turn it into something, uh, festive.

Despite the disco, the humble tree planting event was a welcome thing to stumble upon. Like the rare birds and plants that find sanctuary here, Arroceros faces the occasional threats of so-called development. Google the park's name and the page will yield a long list of articles underscoring the struggle of fending off plans to pretty much bulldoze everything and cover the property in concrete. And yet a handful of young trees planted on city ground testifies to a particular awareness.

We need nature more than it needs us.

The disco beats end soon enough. And we're back to your regular programming: the ambient music of a tropical forest, dotted with bursts of giggles from young students and the chatter over how to compose their field notes.

The park is not pretty. There are no signs that educate you on the plant species and other information. No quaint cafeteria, no spots marked out for the perfect selfie backdrop. Here, one does not find the comfort of urban order and predictability. Rather, a forest with its wild, random, yet comforting textures permeating the senses. \oplus



MEDICALLY YOURS

BY ALICE M. SUN-CUA, MD

Sleep Well Tonight!

A normal adult usually needs at least 6 to 8 hours of sleep daily. Sleep is the time when the brain processes and makes sense of all the sensory input that had been obtained through the day. Sleep deprivation could lead to confusion, lethargy, and in extreme cases, loss of memory and schizophrenia.

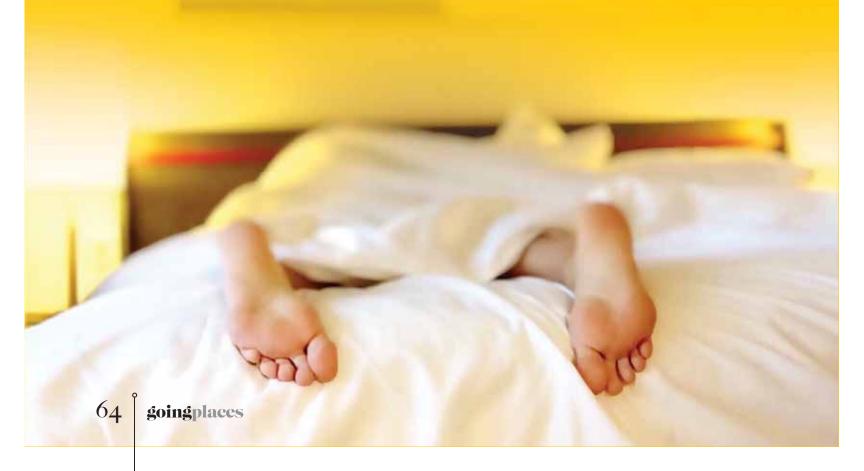
One study said that a good test whether you had enough sleep is to wake up feeling refreshed, and ready to face the day.

Here are some tips on how to get a good night's (or day's) sleep:

- 1. Go to bed at the same time of the day or night. The body is a creature of habit, and its Circadian rhythm needs to be followed. A disruption of this cycle will cause one to wake up cranky, unhappy and still sleepy.
- **2. Avoid loud noises in the bedroom.** Shut out the neighbor's loud karaoke sessions with drapes and tight windows. If needed, use noise-blocking ear buds.
- **3. Keep all gadgets unplugged or in silent mode.** Do you really need to know your friends' status at 2 a.m.? Interrupted sleep is one reason for poor performance in school and at work.
- **4.** Avoid stimulants like coffee, tea, or caffeinated drinks at night. You will probably feel better with a cup of hot milk or soup.
 - 5. Make sure that your room temperature is just right. Too

cold a temperature will result in muscle cramps upon waking up.

- **6.** Indulge in some quiet 'me-time' before going to bed. This could be a short meditation, a prayer, or writing down the day's activities on your daily journal. This will signal to the mind and body that you are ready to rest.
- **7. Read a favorite book,** probably something positive and uplifting, to put you in the mood for some good sleep. Keep crime thrillers and gory slasher stories away.
- 8. Some find that they sleep better with mood music, instrumental pieces that usher in a sense of tranquility while they go to bed. Some swear that 'white noise' (like sounds of soft rain, sea waves, bird songs through a forest walk, etc.) makes for a good night's sleep.
- **9. Night lamps** give soft glows that could enhance sleep, especially when placed in a strategic place like low on the floor where they do not blind the eye.
- 10. Aromatherapy. The scents of lavender, rose, or eucalyptus often give a sense of comfort, and there are many aromatherapy methods now. The easiest would be lighting up incenses that could lull you to dreamland in no time at all. Or, you can invest in a state-of-the-art aromatherapy equipment that also emits a soft, colored glow in the dark.











EXPLORER ENCOUNTERS

A WIN FOR CONSERVATIONISTS & STORYTELLERS

"Why don't we have more of this?" —that's a commonly asked question after the first Explorer Encounters held last Sept. 1.

Over 100 conservationists, National Geographic Explorers, industry experts, and storytellers from all over the Philippines and beyond gathered in Manila House in Bonifacio Global City.

Participants ranging from advocates of marine life in Anilao and Negros, to champions of endemic species conservation in Isabela and Davao, to researchers studying limestones and cave systems in Rizal, enjoyed a half-day of workshops, networking, and talks.

Everyone came home with stories, lively conversations and a reinvigorated community dedicated to advancing the conservation agenda in the Philippines.

WHY STORYTELLING IS IMPORTANT

In a country that's blessed with abundant natural resources and one of the most amazing biodiversity on earth, it's a wonder why nature often takes a backseat in national issues.

For decision-makers, the public, and the next generation to take action against climate change, plastic pollution, disappearing species and rapid deforestation, conservationists need to tell stories that touch the hearts and minds of their audience.

Ann Dumaliang, the Project Manager of Masungi Georeserve, opened the event with passionate remarks about these and the crucial role of storytelling in their conservation efforts.

"Storytelling has always been an important part of Masungi, from the way we have designed our trails and experiences to how we have advanced our conservation causes. In the digital age, it has helped us communicate the challenges and solutions we have faced — and continue to face — which is crucial in taking care of the land and all the species inside it," Dumaliang said.

Following that up, Dr. Yannick Kuehl, who serves as the Senior Director for National Geographic Society-Asia, encouraged everyone in attendance to apply for National Geographic Society-Grants Program, to help develop their projects and increase their impact in society. Kuehl hopes that NatGeo can help empower bold people with transformational ideas.

ADVANCING CONSERVATION CAUSES

Participants joined in 4 curated workshops designed to help them improve their conservation work through different storytelling methods and platforms.

LIVE STORYTELLING SESSIONS

Prasenjeet Yadav, talked about his journey to becoming a NatGeo Explorer. Yadav, in his works, such as documenting the peculiar animals in the Sky Islands of India, shows how he is bridging the gap between the scientific and non-scientific community-much like how he combines being a molecular biologist and photographer.

HIGHLIGHTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The last speaker was Department of Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, who stressed the importance of protecting tourist sites. She reiterated the commitment of department to seeing environmental standards and safeguards executed and calls for all the industry players to make our destinations more sustainable.

ENCOURAGE AND ENGAGE

Conservation has to be united, hopeful and made relevant — these are the main takeaways of many attendees and speakers of what has been an encouraging and engaging Explorer Encounters.

Explorer Encounters was brought to life by Masungi Georeserve, supported by National Geographic Society-Asia and the Forest Foundation Philippines #FYI

NEW DINING DESTINATION OPENS IN COMMONWEALTH

A new lifestyle/ dining strip – one that delivers good fun and great eats for the entire family – has just opened in the northern part of the metropolis named Calle Bistro. Ideally located in Commonwealth, Quezon City, Calle Bistro is located right beside the popular Ever Commonwealth mall.

"We aim that Calle Bistro will become the favorite destination of families and friends who are looking for a foodie adventure in this side of the city," said Chie Arao-Santos, Corporate Marketing Manager of the Ever Group of Companies. "We welcome everyone especially those who live in the northern Metro Manila who want to have a good time and memorable dining. Calle Bistro is perfect for those living in Commonwealth and nearby areas as they don't have to travel too far and endure the heavy traffic."

Calle Bistro will complement Ever Commonwealth as it has more than a dozen distinct tenants that range from Chinese to Filipino restaurants, cafes and wine bars. Its perfect mix of stores and shops create an ideal community where customers can dine, meet, relax and enjoy a variety of flavors and experiences with family and friends from breakfast to after-dinner drinks.









Drop by Calle Bistro and enjoy the food and offerings from Starbucks, Gerry's Restaurant Bar, Elm's Kapihan & Winery, PUB Express, Hap Chan and Macao Imperial Tea. Soon to open within the year are Tim Hortons, After Twelve Bar, Cook the Bread and Teriyaki Boy, including JT's Manukan Grille, Adobo Connection, Sisig Society, and Ima's Kitchen.

Calle Bistro is developed by Ever Group of Companies subsidiary Everscapes. For updates and information, visit Calle Bistro's Facebook and Instagram pages @CalleBistroPH

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One of the world's leading online travel companies, Booking.com allows travelers to access the world's largest selection of accommodations in over 230 countries and territories, and book their ideal place in a snap using the company's website and mobile app.

Under the partnership, all PLDT Home and Smart Pre-

paid and Smart Postpaid customers can now enjoy up to 30% discount on select Booking.com listings in the Philippines and top Asian destinations including Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan until Dec. 31

"Over the years, Filipinos have cultivated a passion for traveling, and with this strategic partnership, we're excited to provide our PLDT Home and Smart customers with rewarding experiences on their getaways," said Oscar A. Reyes, Jr., SVP and Head of Consumer Business Market Development for PLDT and Smart.

"This is another proof that we go beyond providing digital services and keenly look for ways to give our customers epic and meaningful experiences attuned to their passions and lifestyles – all with the help of our world-leading partners," he added.

PLDT Home customers can enjoy special deals by visiting www.booking.com/PLDT, while Smart customers can book discounted rates at www.booking.com/Smart.

Using these dedicated Booking.com sites for PLDT Home and Smart customers, users simply have to select their country of destination, choose their preferred accommodation from the listings, and pick the rate bearing the PLDT or Smart logo. PLDT Home and Smart customers can make easy, hassle-free, and secure reservation with instant confirmation on the special Booking.com site.





CRAVINGS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

BY KIM FERRER

The Christmas season comes as early as September for Filipinos - and The Cravings Group kicked off the month with the launch of its special holiday offerings.

"This year is very special as we are celebrating our 30th anniversary also we have 2 exciting additions: the modern and chic catering setups and the delicious tapasstyle cocktail food," said Pia G. Trinidad, Business Development and Strategy Officer of The Cravings Group.

Cravings introduces new sets of delectable cakes, desserts, party trays, catering themes and gift options. Choose from new party themes for your big get-togethers: Cider, Tangerine, Rust, and Ochre.

For smaller groups and intimate celebrations, Cravings Group's Christmas classics are perfect centerpieces for your holiday spread such as Roast Turkey with Chestnut Raisin Stuffing, Salt-Crusted Fresh Salmon, Crackling Pork Bagnet with Arroz Valenziana or Truffle Rice, Four Cheese Lasagna and Chicken Cordon Bleu

"At the center of our catering spread this year is refresh. While we have perfected the taste of our food over the last 30 years, now we want to master the party experience with new themes that can't be found anywhere else," said Bea G. Trinidad, The Cravings Group Operations Head.





HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

A one-stop shop for holiday fetes, The Cravings Group also has special gourmet gifts made up of cakes and gourmet boxes curated by The Cravings Group's brands.

Enjoy the Christmas-only special edition cakes such as Strawberry Shortcake, Avocado Mousse Cake and Naked Devil's Food Cake.

Make the holiday even sweeter with Cravings' bakeshop items such as Ensaymada and Holiday Bars or Wicked's desserts such as Cookie Shards, S'mores, and Chocolate Barks.

Elevate gift ideas with premium gift packages from Epicurious, which include wine, truffles, cheese, artisanal chocolates, cold cuts, and salad dressings all wrapped in sophisticated gift boxes.

THENING 30

With the reveal of its holiday offerings, The Cravings Group also marks a new milestone with its 30th anniver-

'We're happy that all 3 generations of our family are working the extra mile to provide the exceptional Christmas experience to our customers this year. Bea and Pia are at the forefront of infusing new ideas into The Cravings Group and enable our much-loved brands to remain the top choice of our customers in the next generations to come, said Badjie Guerrero-Trinidad, CEO of The Cravings Group.

Follow their Instagram and Facebook @thecravingsgroup



AUTHENTIC VIETNAMESE FLAVORS AT CRIMSON HOTEL

Crimson Hotel Filinvest City, Manila took diners to a gastronomic adventure featuring the diverse cuisine from the Land of the Dragon People.

Vietnamese cuisine offers a numerous combination of flavors, with cultural influences from different countries such as France, China, and India. In the Philippines, this cuisine is already gaining popularity where pho noodles and bahn mi hit the Filipino palate.

Foodies who crave for authentic Vietnamese dishes went to the Crimson Hotel in Alabang when it featured the Taste of Vietnam inits buffet spread at Café Eight restaurant last month.

Now in its 2nd year, the hotel welcomed talented chefs from Vietnam – Nguyen Thi Khanh Ngan, Tran Kim Hoang Trong, and Vo Van Chien who recreated special dishes from their home.

A balance of aroma, fresh herbs, pungent flavors, sourness, and sweetness of ingredients were present in the buffet of Vietnamese spring rolls, pho soups, stewed snakehead, roasted duck leg, chicken curry, fried noodles and so much more.

Guests were also savoring the sip of the classic Vietnamese drip coffee for the whole month of September at the hotel's Lobby Lounge.

POWER LUNCHES WITH KITSHO'S SET MENUS

Executive meetings are an integral part of the corporate world. These intimate gatherings of corporate officers often unfold during what the industry calls the 'power lunches.' And which makes sense because the thought processes within these meetings can leave one really famished.

But power lunches cannot just happen anywhere. They unfold in establishments with intimate corners or function rooms, even to the point of exclusivity for some. This is where Kitsho can help corporate people find the best spot for their meetings.

With function rooms for pocket gatherings, or a bigger

room for a more people, Kitsho fits the bill perfectly. With lunch set menu options, executives would have hit 2 birds with one stone – doing meetings in a conducive atmosphere and lunching with the most delectable options.



Filipinos who love shrimp could go for any of the tempura sets. Or if you are the type who love fresh catch, there's the sashimi and/or sushi sets to choose from. Those that love meat and seafood could go for the hot pot options, while those that want their meats prepared differently could opt for the teppanyaki set choices.

Kitsho's smaller rooms have a P5,000 consumable rate while the bigger rooms have a P7,000 consumable rate.

For entrepreneurs and restaurateurs who wish to have Japanese items in their respective menus or would want to have an entire selection created for them can get in touch with executive chef Mizumoto "Hiro" Masahiro. Chef Hiro would gladly assist those who needs his expertise on the matter.

The restaurant is located at the ground floor of Hotel Jen Manila right across CCP Complex along Roxas Boulevard







MÁS: NEW UNLI TAPAS AND GINEBRERIA OPENS IN GREENHILLS

Is there anything better than rich and hearty tapas paired with a zesty and refreshing glass of mixed drinks? Yes, the answer is unlimited tapas and ginebrerias!

This new unlimited tapas ginebreria, located along the streets of Greenhills, exudes a youthful, vibrant, and upbeat Spanish vibe which makes it the perfect place to go to after work or the weekend with friends for a fun night over tapas and ginebreria.

Recently opened last September, MÁS -- which means "more" in Spanish -- serves a wide array of tapas, that will give you a taste of Spain, and a straightforward ginebreria menu that matches the bar's easy-going vibe.

Being a Ginebreria, or a gin bar, it highlights gin in their ginebreria with a growing gin library. Gin enthusiasts have something look forward to, as they plan on hosting Gin nights, where guests can come up with their very own gin concoctions.

Non-gin drinkers need not to worry, because the place will also be featuring boutique alcohol brands for tequila

and monthly whiskey nights.

With a relatively limited food menu, each food item was thoughtfully arranged and selected to guarantee a satisfying gastronomical experience.

There are 2 unlimited tapas tiers — Php 550 ++ for the MÁS Classics and Php 750 ++ for the MÁS Experience.

Aside from unlimited tapas, the place also offers an add-on option of steak, salad and dessert.

The menu was created by Geri Camahort and Tori Olbes of G&T Private Dining, young and talented chefs who share the same love and passion for tapas and pintxos.

But of course, no tapas experience is complete without a drink to complement it. The bar offers straightforward drinks that are done well, such as Sangria and Gin and Tonic. As well as signature ginebreria like the Eighteen Missouri and Palm Trees and Martinis. MÁS well-curated ginebreria menu is made by OTO's very own David Aba-

So what're you waiting for? Whether you want dance the night away or simply relax and sample tasty tapas and ginebreria, head to MÁS for a sure fun night with friends.

MICHELIN GUIDE TO KOREAN DINING

Michelin Guide is a world-famous guide to the best restaurants across the globe.

There were many additions in the area of Seoul, especially focusing on restaurants serving Korean cui-

sine. Travelers looking for the best in Korean dining should definitely visit a Michelin-starred restaurant, serving the highest quality in taste, presentation, and nutrition.

MICHELIN STAR RESTAURANTS

Michelin Guide has been searching for and recognizing outstanding restaurants for over 100 years.

The restaurants included in the guide are rated based on their taste and presentation, in order of three to one stars. Three-star restaurants rank supreme, being worth taking a trip just to taste. Two- and one-star restaurants follow as stand-out establishments

SEOUL'S NEW ADDITIONS TO MICHELIN GUIDE BIB GOURMAND

Forty-eight restaurants in Seoul were announced to be on the

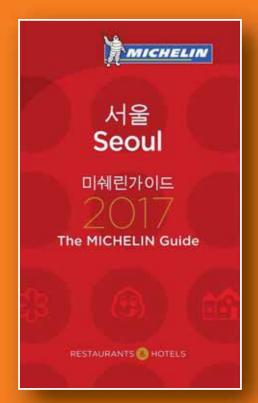
2018 Bib Gourmand list. While the restaurants on Bib Gourmand cannot compare with the luxury of Michelin Guide starred restaurants, the affordability of Bib Gourmand more than makes up for it.

The separate listing of Bib Gourmand was created in 1957, using the pictogram of the Michelin Tire mascot, Bibendum, licking his lips after enjoying a delicious meal. To be included on the list, restaurants must have outstanding meals under a certain price, based on the cost of living in the specific region.

In Europe, meals must be 35 Euros or less, 5000 yen in Japan, 40 dollars in the US, and 35,000 won in Korea.

This year, 12 new restaurants were added to the previous year's list, for a grand total of 48 restaurants in Seoul. Detailed information on each of the restaurants can be found on the official Seoul Michelin Guide website.

Further more information visit guide.michelin.co.kr





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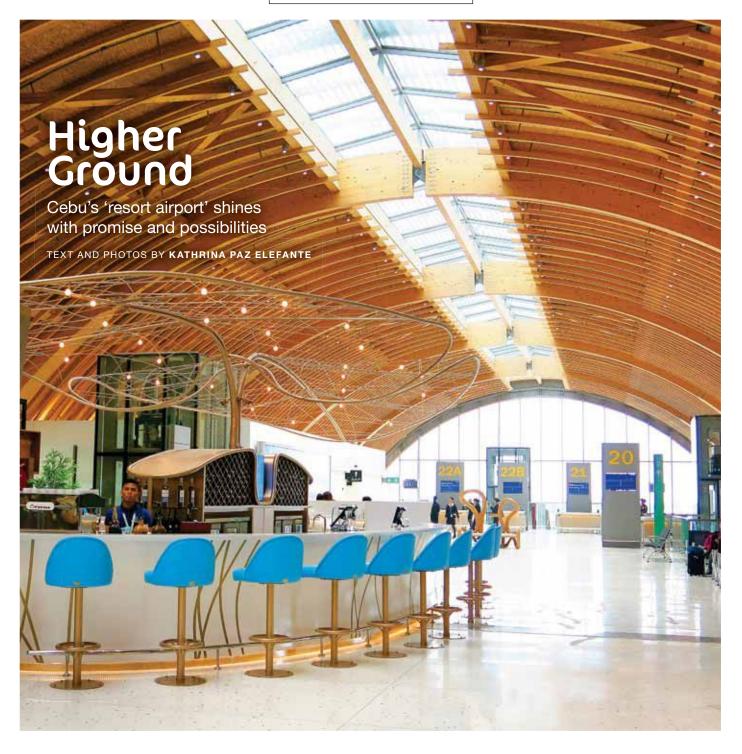
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Read everything about tourism



#ROOM4MORE



Cebu's new Mactan International Airport Terminal 2 certainly embodies Cebu's 'queenly' reputation. Architects Budji Layug and Royal Pineda together with renowned furniture designer Kenneth Cobonpue conceptualized the airport's grand design – and with such big names together in one project, one could only expect world-class quality.

The most prevalent element of the 65,500-square meter structure is the elegant-looking glulam timber, which makes up the undulating roof meant to resemble waves. Floor-to-ceiling glass allows plenty of natural light and make the granite floor decorated with shredded mother of pearl sparkle, which calls to mind the Queen City of the South's famous beach destinations.

The resort-like feel is further enhanced with check-in counters made of marble-like material accented with a faux-rattan mesh made by furniture company Dedon. Complementing these luxurious finishes are state-of-the-art equipment such as a baggage handling system with a 4-level screening system and separate X-ray for oversized luggage.

Aside from the facilities, travelers can enjoy shopping at the duty-free shops, relaxing at the premium lounges and dining at one of the food outlets.

Cebu's 'resort airport' has set the bar high – and we wouldn't be surprised if it becomes one of Asia's or even the world's best airports.

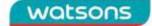


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